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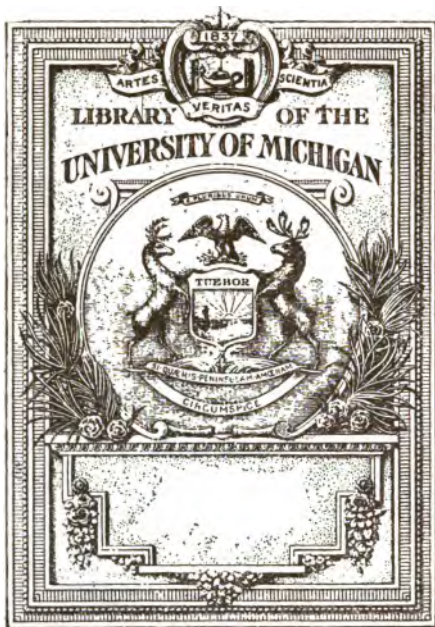
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DAMASCUS.

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A

JOURNEY TO DAMASCUS

THROUGH

EGYPT, NUBIA, ARABIA PETRÆA,
PALESTINE, AND SYRIA.

BY

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH, M.P.

WITH

Illustrations from Original Drawings.

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CONTENTS
OF
THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER XIV.

Ascent of Mount Sinai—Mountain of St. Catherine—Horeb and Er Rahab—Feuds of the Arabs—Defile of El-Ain - - - - p. 1

CHAPTER XV.

Akaba—The Hadji Road to Mecca—Murder of Sheikh Suleiman by the Mezeiné tribe - 25

CHAPTER XVI.

Sheikh of the Alouins and his Son—Bedouins rushing to Action—Chiefs of the Howât Tribe—The Desert - - - - - 39

414011

CHAPTER XVII.

Arab Superstition—Bedouins of the Tiyayah— Attack upon our Caravan—Ruins of El Ouji —Caravan of Camels—Remains of Rehaibe— Ruins of Elusa - - - - -	57
--	----

CHAPTER XVIII.

Beersheba—Pastoral Arabs—Wells—Daharieh— Hebron—Turkish Soldiers—Plains of Mamre —Edroua - - - - -	79
--	----

CHAPTER XIX.

Bethlehem—The Convent, and its different Re- ligious Communities—Prospect of Jerusalem —Armenian Convent—Valley of Jehoshaphat —The Great Mosque—The Convent Church —Protestant Congregation - - -	95
--	----

CHAPTER XX.

The Patriarch of the Armenian Church—Tomb of the Kings—Pool of Siloam—Church of the Holy Sepulchre - - - - -	113
--	-----

CHAPTER XXI.

Valley of Hinnom—Mount Zion—Sacred Places —Tomb of Lazarus—Bethany - - -	131
---	-----

CONTENTS.

v

CHAPTER XXII.

Plains of Mamre—Sheikh of the Jellaheen— Kurmul—Ruins of Kurnub—Wady Araba— Mount Hor—Aaron's Tomb - - -	147
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIII.

Wady Mousa—Petra—The Khasné—Tribes of the Alouins - - - - -	173
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIV.

Ruins of El Deir—Khasné—Wady Araba— Course of the Jordan—Shore of the Dead Sea	195
---	-----

CHAPTER XXV.

Great Mosque of Omar—Mosque of El Aksa— Pools of Solomon—Sheikh Said of Gaza— Convent of Mar-Saba—Latin Convent—The French Bishop of Babylon—Tahir Pacha -	207
---	-----

CHAPTER XXVI.

Samaria—Valleys of Ephraim—Djanin—Naza- reth—Acre—Tyre—Sidon—Beirout - -	221
---	-----

CHAPTER XXVII.

Princesses of the Lebanon—Natural Bridge at Nahr Leban—Antiquities - - -	239
---	-----

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Village of Akoura—Hosrun—Cedars of Lebanon	
— Base of Mount Lebanon — Baalbec —	
Quarries—Zebdeni—Suburb of Damascus	- 261

CHAPTER XXIX.

Damascus — The Consul's House — Bazaars —	
Damascus under the Sultan—Souk Barrada	283

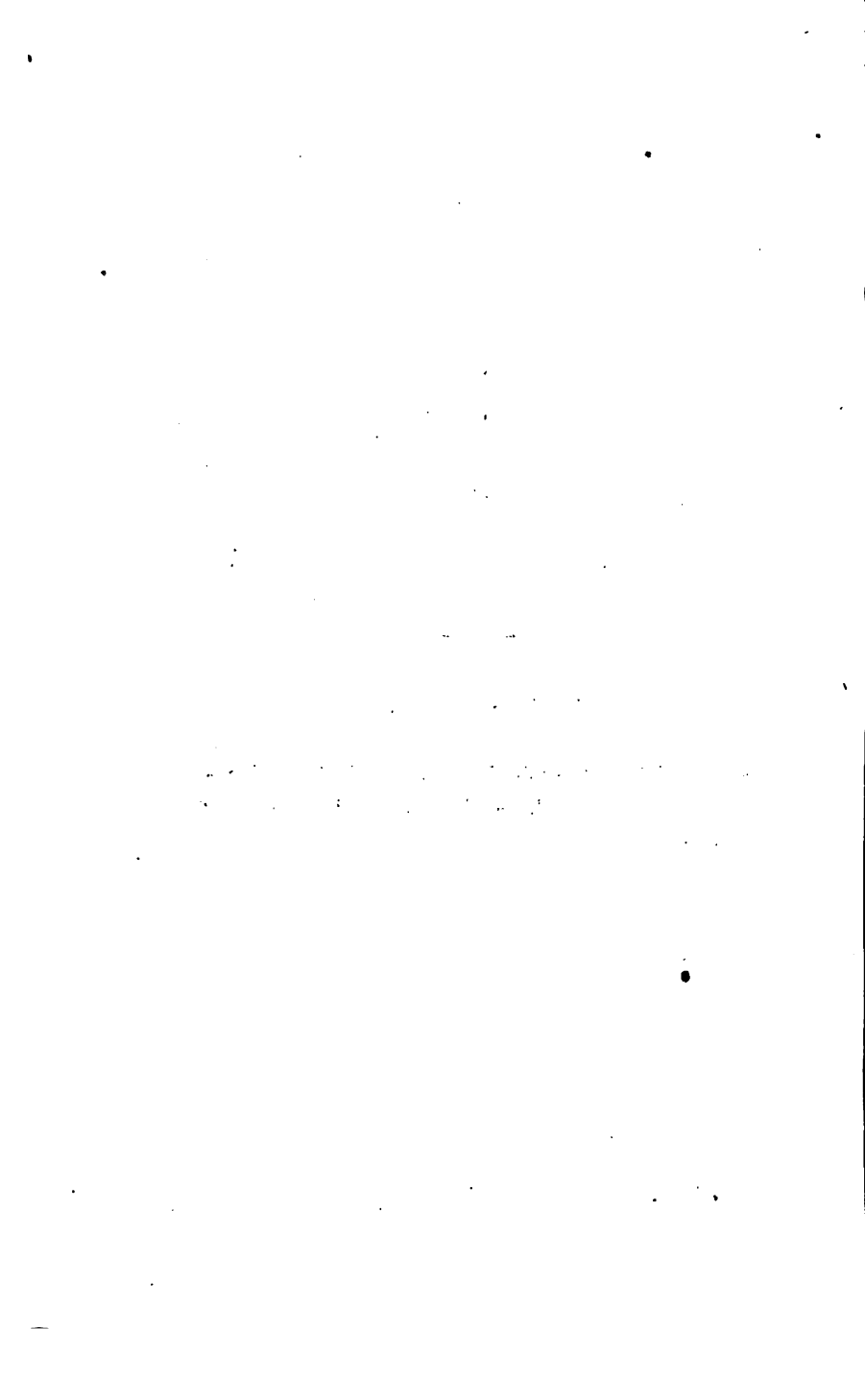
CHAPTER XXX.

Zahle—Mar Elias—Beirout—Alexandria—Me-	
hemet Ali—Malta—Gibraltar—Corunna —	
Ferrol—Portsmouth	- - - - 293

DIARY
OF
A JOURNEY TO DAMASCUS.

CHAPTER XIV.

**Ascent of Mount Sinai—Mountain of St. Catherine—
Horeb and Er Rahab—Feuds of the Arabs—Defile
of El-Ain.**



CHAPTER XIV.

MAY 25th.—Early this morning we began the ascent of the mountain of Gebel Mousa, or Sinai. The pass lies through a chasm at the back of the convent. We had a host of Bedouins, who carried up our carpets and provisions, and two Greek servants of the Superior as Cicerones. The ascent is easy enough. Rough steps, formed of pieces of granite laid one above the other, lead from the base to the summit, except where the path is worn away. The first halting-place is a small chapel, built on the spot where once some monks, going up to pray, in a time of great scarcity, are said to have met the Virgin, who promised them bread. On their return to the

convent, they found food had been sent to them. Here I saw the name of Lamartine, and that of Frances Trollope—a curious contrast. Further on we arrived at an arched gateway through the rock; a little higher up another leads to the spot where stands the chapel of St. Elias. Near this is a single cypress of surpassing beauty—alone, in the midst of this desolate spot, it rears its head to the sky. These trees suit the landscape, and there is something peculiarly graceful in their form which, in a trimmed parterre, is lost sight of, but recognised in the midst of crags and precipices.

I walked into the chapel, which had nothing to boast of but a very bad picture, before which the monks burned a taper. From hence, we ascended, step by step, to the summit. The print of a camel's foot upon the granite, is curious, and very distinct; and by tradition is ascribed both to Mahomet and Moses. Mount St. Catherine, which we see rising before us, is the finest object in the view from hence; the rest of the landscape, though grand and striking, is confused.

Leaving Mount Sinai, we ascended to the peak of Sassafeh. This point entirely commands the plain of Er Rahab, and countless hosts might be gathered beneath it. There is no question but that it directly overlooks the largest space in Sinai, without any intervening rocks or peaks. Whether from this fact alone the monkish traditions are to be overthrown, I am not competent to decide. This mountain is more imposing when seen from below, than from its more elevated portions. The path, or track, which leads to it from the chapel of Mount Sinai, after descending that part of the mountain as far as the cypress tree, winds among huge rocks and crags, through precipices and small ravines, clothed with wild plants and shrubs. The air is filled with the sweet perfume of wild thyme, rosemary, and other scented herbs. We passed a small chapel, dedicated to St. Gregorio, and, near it, the chapel of Pentalemon. Continuing our course, we came upon another shrine, hidden among the rocks, and here began the ascent of Sassafeh. The whole of our track, from Sinai to the base of this

peak, was a succession of picturesque objects. Lovely indeed are these green solitudes among the hills, where, by some rocky well, many a solitary hermit has prayed over his life's journey, with his garden of herbs, and his thoughts of heaven, for all his occupation. There are still traces of spots "where once a garden smiled," near these chapels and hermitages, but no one dwells now amidst these hills but the Bedouin, who passes along their base, to-day fixes his tent and feeds his camels, and to-morrow is seen no more.

The convent monks rarely stir abroad, and would little think of turning anchorites. A great religious change has been effected here since devotion was evinced by solitude and privation, which, accompanied by penance and prayer, were considered the passports to heaven. Now, though the chapels are still there, and the mountain wells are as clear and sweet as ever—though the desert is still wrapt in its own eternal and magnificent repose, no mass is said, nor are beads told upon the hill side, or in the secret valleys and recesses of Sinai or Horeb, but, in-

stead of this, the monks fatten on their messes of eggs and garlic within the convent walls, and seldom go without a dinner and a bed.

We descended to the plain by the long and steep defile of Sheraybe, one of the ravines running down the side of Horeb, and reached the convent at nightfall.

May 26th.—To-day we proceeded up the valley towards the plain of Er Rahab, and, turning to the left, round the base of Horeb, arrived at the stone where the Israelites are said to have worshipped the golden calf. Following up the valley which separates Sinai and Horeb from the mountain of St. Catherine, we reached some ruined convents, named Bostani, Apostoli, and Abougifa, the latter of which, high up in another ravine, we saw only from a distance. After a good hour's walk, we reached the stone of Moses, which is a piece of granite, not larger than many others that surround it; on the side nearest the track are several horizontal fissures, about a foot long, one over another, like steps, from which, at some time or other, water certainly appears to have filtered. On

the other side of the rock are more of the same description, only these are less perfect. The rock is a singular one, but tradition seems to have no more foundation here, than she possesses for the site of the golden calf. Soon after appeared the deserted convent of El Arbain, the garden of which is beautiful, full of fruit trees, and adorned with noble cypresses. We breakfasted at what is called the Well of the Partridge, under a perpendicular cliff of granite. There is some limestone near, in which the spring rises from a ledge of rock in the heart of the mountain of St. Catherine. After a long and toilsome ascent, we reached the summit. This point is the highest in the Peninsula, except one, called Um Shaumer, mentioned by Robinson, which certainly overtops us. We saw the Gulf of Suez, the African range of mountains, and the Gulf of Akaba. Sinai was like a smaller peak below us; Gebel Serbal, Tih, Frey, Howât, Wady Sheikh, Wady Feiran, Er Rahab, and a thousand other hills and plains lay spread out before our feet. In a small chapel on the peak, is an excavation in the rock, where

the bones of Santa Catherina were found. The legend is this:—St. Catherine was the daughter of one of the rulers of Egypt who persecuted the Christians. She was a very clever and beautiful woman; her father wished her to marry, but she declined to give herself to any one who was not wiser than herself. At this time, came a Greek monk, who by his influence converted her to Christianity. The father, having discovered the fact, threw her into prison, where she had a dream, in which God appeared to her, and put a ring upon her finger. After this, she became more and more steadfast in her faith. She was subjected to the torture of being shaken, like Regulus, in a box full of nails, and afterwards beheaded; but no blood appeared, only milk flowed from the wound. Before she could be buried, her body disappeared, and more than three hundred years afterwards, when the convent below had been founded, a monk, who lived in the hills, having been warned in a dream, discovered the bones, and conveyed them to the shrine where they have ever since re-

posed, shrouded in satin and gold, before the high altar.

I looked very carefully at the relative positions of Horeb and Er Rahab. From the base of Horeb to the end of the plain there is a gentle rise on each side; large hills enclose the space, which forms a gigantic amphitheatre. To the furthest part of the mountain, from the centre of the plain, there is nothing to break the view. Mr. Kinnear draws a distinction between Sinai and Horeb, resting his position on the fact, that the expressions in the Bible are always "upon Sinai," and "in Horeb," wherefore he considers Horeb as a district. I cannot conceive why one of the peaks of Sinai should be selected as the particular one where the miracle took place. If the Lord was upon the mount, surely He must have been omnipresent, and His glory must have filled the whole of it. The cloud, probably, enveloped the entire mountain, and the presence of God must have shone upon the remotest recesses as well as over every pinnacle. It is clearly impossible that, from the plain of Er Rahab,

the whole host could have seen the presence of the Lord upon Mount Sinai, unless the fact be admitted that the entire mountain, rock, hill, and glen, were filled with the same manifestations of Divine presence.

This morning Sheikh Hussein entered my tent with an unusually long face, and I soon saw that there was something wrong. He came to say that there was a feud between his tribe and the Mezeiné Arabs, who live between the convent and Akaba. They had long been at variance on account of the Oulad Said tribes having had the monopoly of conveying travellers to and from the convent. These Arabs, as Hussein is informed, seized the camels of the last party, who went to Akaba on their return. The Governor of Akaba sent after them, and recovered all but seven, but took two prisoners as hostages for the missing ones, who, it seems, are now confined in that fortress. Upon this the Mezeiné tribe have sent to warn Hussein that they know he is about to go to Akaba from the convent with a large caravan, and that he had better look out. In conse-

quence, he wishes to take all his people well-armed in case of attack. I asked how many? On his replying, about fifty, I told him I had nothing to give them to eat; that I would give no backshish—that I cared not for ourselves, adding that we were under the protection of his tribe, and that his would be the responsibility should anything occur. He said the men required nothing—that they would carry their own provisions—that for his own defence and for that of his tribe it was necessary that they should go in numbers sufficient to repel an attack if one was made, and that his head was responsible for ours. I repeated what I had said before, and that he might do as he liked; at the same time, I thought that going in strong bodies into the country of another tribe might provoke hostilities which we should all desire to avoid. He seemed to differ with me on this point. I treated the matter as a bugbear, and asked him if he thought they would really forewarn him if they meant to attack us. He said it was always their way to give fair notice. It is impossible to under-

stand the bickerings and jealousy of these tribes. The real truth is, that most of them are starving, as there has been little or no rain for three years, and the poorer ones do not like to see others gaining money by travellers, while they have no share in the profits.

Before we left the community of St. Catherine, Father Nicodemus (the prior) showed us the library—a collection of dusty folios piled one over another in endless confusion, and covered with the dust of ages. The books appear to be mostly Greek, and I suspect the monks do not very often trouble their repose.

The interior of the building is a strange medley of galleries and passages, dormitories and cells. There are at present only eighty monks, who perform all the offices of the convent, dividing the several labours among themselves. No servants are here, and no Arab ever enters the walls. They profess extreme poverty; but the riches of the church belie this, and I suspect if the Bedouins knew how much of value these old

walls contain, they would risk a great deal to get at it. The monks feel that theirs is no established tenure, and are always in a defensive position. They have stores of every sort, and large granaries in the convent, of which, however, they take care to make no display.

May 28th.—We left the convent this morning, shaping our course towards the base of Sassafeh. A short valley led us into the great Wady Sheikh; the mountains now gradually decrease in size, and the scenery begins to lose its imposing aspect. Flat wastes of sand, covered with stunted bushes and parched vegetation, opened upon us, and rocks and low hills assumed the place of crags and precipices. The caravan followed in due time; while we halted at mid-day, a storm, which had been gathering all the morning, came on in earnest. The thunder was louder than any I ever heard; the forked lightning flashed along the peaks of the mountains, and seemed to come from every direction. For two hours it rained incessantly, and the wind was so strong that we

were obliged to get our Arabs to hold on by the tent ropes, piling our baggage in the middle. After some time, the clouds passed away, and we journeyed onwards.

May 29th.—The morning was fine, but the traces of the waters were visible all over the desert in the watercourses and wet sand. We started at five, and rode on till eleven, over a more dreary and desolate waste than it is possible to conceive. The hills are low and unmarked by any varied forms. The valleys, as well as the rocks, seem to be a bed of limestone mixed with sand. Hour after hour, we toiled along them without seeing anything to break the desolate sameness of our course, and when we looked back upon the bold granite peaks of Sinai, gradually fading from our view, the contrast was most remarkable.

On reaching our night quarters we found that the Arabs had kept all their camels together, instead of allowing them to stray in the small ravines leading to the valley. They had lighted more fires than usual, and appeared to be on the *qui vive*. Sheikh

Hussein came to my tent, and told me that he had sent off a relation of his, Sheikh Mousa, to endeavour to treat with the Mezeiné, who he said were in force before us, and had possession of the wells of El Ain. I told him he might do as he liked, that the tribes ought to settle their disputes among themselves, that I would not pay a para to any one, and that I should go on at daylight. This tribe of Mezeiné consider they have as much right to make money by the conveyance of travellers as the other privileged ones, and on several occasions they have attempted to levy contributions. If the Oulad Said were with a weak party, the Mezeiné would force them to pay half the price which the travellers had given; the consequence of this is a perpetual feud.

May 30th.—This morning, at daybreak, we were off, having sent part of our baggage on before, with a tent which we desired to be pitched near the wells said to be held by the Mezeiné. The party took care, however, so to linger on the way, as to allow us to arrive very soon after them. They told

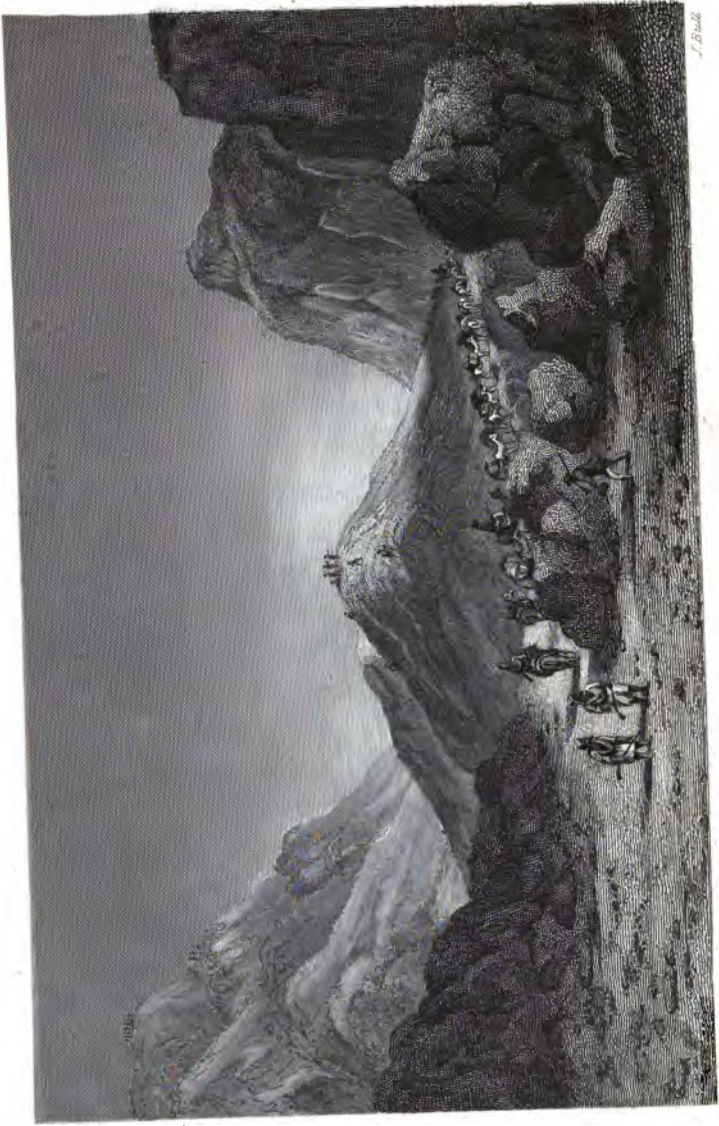
us that when they came to the place, they found four or five Arabs who decamped into the hills above, and who fired some shots as they went off. In a few minutes, we heard some more reports, which were clearly notes of defiance. Our Arabs shook their heads, looked wise, and evidently did not like it at all.

Sheikh Hussein was perfectly cool, and said that we must enter the defiles, and force our passage. He then asked me for some powder, and I gave him a supply in his cap, which I half filled. We had at this time about forty of the Oulad Said, besides ourselves. The scene was very curious and exciting, for even supposing that there was no danger of attack, the preparations for warfare were the same, and the people, animated by their old feuds with the Mezeiné tribe, were evidently eager to beat them, and to endeavour to pay off old scores. Some of the older men were very savage and vociferous. Indeed all, except Hussein, were talking together loudly, and preparing their arms. They stripped to their shirts, and took off their turbans, hav-

ing nothing on their heads but small woollen caps; their arms, knives, and pistols, were bound on by belts and thongs, and they loosened their powder horns from the shoulder, and carried their guns in their hands. Before us the hills rose perpendicularly about four hundred feet, apparently closing the valley as with a wall. Through this barrier there was a very narrow gorge or defile, so rugged and steep that only one camel could go at a time through the large fragments of stone and rock which encumbered the pass. The caravan was to proceed up the defile, and the Oulad Said were to scale the heights which commanded it, to prevent our being fired upon from above. But ten good men could have held the pass against a hundred, had they known how.

Before starting, the tribe formed a circle and said a prayer for success. Suddenly a man appeared on the heights and beckoned as if to speak. Hussein dispatched one of his people up the mountain, and these two met on the sky line. While I was watching them, Hussein came up to me, saying, now

4



PASS OF EL AIN.

1843

let us strike the tents and move forwards. This was before the conference on the hill had ended. The old chief was quite right in his decision, taking advantage of the hesitation of the enemy. The tribe all lent a hand, and in five minutes the tent was struck, the camels ranged, and our march begun. At this moment the sight was beautiful; the Arabs had their matches lighted; some carried small iron boxes with charcoal fire, in case of necessity; others brandished their swords or spears. The left hand division of the pass commanded all the points of the other side, with two or three exceptions. The moment the first camel moved slowly on to the mouth of the defile, those of the tribe who were armed sprang up the hill side, like greyhounds. In ten minutes, they were scattered over the mountain face, from the highest crags to the bottom, covering our line of march, and as they bounded along, looking warily down every gully of the rocks that might have concealed an enemy.

Just as we entered the glen, the man who

had been sent up the hill, returned. He said he could not tell how many of the enemy there were, as he had not crossed the hill, but added, that the Arab he had met declared that we should not pass. Upon this, our man laughed in his face, and left him declaring that pass we would and should, in spite of the whole Mezeiné tribe.

We moved on slowly, the camels ascending the pass in single file. We placed ourselves in the van, and the rear was brought up by the servants, one of whom carried a blunt carving-knife, and another a huge pair of horse pistols, with an empty powder-horn slung round his shoulders. We had all agreed not to fire unless attacked, and to let the rival tribes settle their own differences.

We could hear the shouts long and loud of our own people as they bounded like deer along the crags, and fancied at times that their challenges were answered. But no enemy came; not a shot was fired; not a voice was raised in answer to their defiance; and after half an hour we wound down the descent, the van changing to the

rear, and no sign of life could we distinguish but the figures of our own party on the top-most peaks.

When all was over, or, at least, when the defile was passed, one could not but reflect that, with the hot blood and excitable nature of these wild people, a single shot fired might have cost many lives, and it would have been most painful to have been concerned in any such affray; so that we were doubly pleased; first, to have seen a good field-day, with all the effect of scenery and the adjuncts of caution, preparation, and the detail of mountain warfare; and secondly, to have nothing to regret in the shape of encounter or loss of life. Hussein gave a silent laugh when we passed the last rocks, and said little more all day; and everything relapsed into its usual routine, except that we had parties of scouts upon the crags before and behind us, keeping a look out all day in case of surprise.

Soon afterwards we met some Terabin Arabs, allies of the Oulad Said, coming from Akaba, who threw some light upon

the subject. They said that the Mezeiné had set upon and endeavoured to detain some camels belonging to the Oulad Said, with their people, returning from Akaba two days ago, whereupon one of the latter had shot at and killed the son of the Sheikh of the Mezeiné. The Oulad Said escaped, but the relatives of the deceased took up the matter, and as the Terabin says, started with thirty dromedaries to catch Mr. Fiske and Mr. Erskine, who had preceded us from Sinai, in order to have their revenge upon another party of the Oulad Said who were conducting them. This the Terabin alleged as the reason why the Mezeiné were so few in number at the wells of El-Ain. The Terabin also said that if the Mezeiné caught Sheikh Suleiman, who was with the two English, they would kill him, in retaliation for the death of their Sheikh's son.

On leaving the defile of El-Ain, we entered a region of bolder rocks and more picturesque scenery. Winding among the mountains, without any certain course, except the track best suited for our camels,

we passed by a dreary-looking burial-ground into Wady Atiyah, where we encamped. While we were preparing food, Sheikh Mousa and his companion arrived, bringing with them one of the Mezeiné. They said they had been taken by these people, who would not listen to their proposals; that they had been kept by force at the wells, and that the Mezeiné intended to have attacked us, but, finding we were too strong, gave up the idea. Afterwards they released the Sheikh and his companion, and sent one of the most moderate among the relations of the man who was killed, to see what reparation the tribe were inclined to make.

Sheikh Mousa came to me with this story, accompanied by Hussein, and both asked that I would write to Cairo to complain of the Mezeiné—to which I replied, I had nothing to reproach them with; they had not molested me, and I had no doubt they had not molested the travellers who preceded us. If they had, I said, they would most surely repent it. I told the two Sheikhs I would not meddle in these affairs, or give any

opinion about the man who had been shot; that we should hear it all at Akaba, and until then I would say nothing.

There were great councils, smoking, and long discussions, last night, among them. How matters ended I know not; but as I lay down to sleep, heartily sick of Oulad Saids and Mezeinés, and every other tribe, the last sounds I heard were the noisy debates of the Arabs, and the last sight I saw as I closed my eyes was the fitful gleam of their watch-fires with the wild figures surrounding them.

CHAPTER XV.

**Akaba — The Hadji Road to Mecca — Murder of
Sheikh Suleiman by the Mezeiné tribe.**



CHAPTER XV.

JUNE 1st, Akaba.—We left our mid-day station in a hurry, and it was much against my will to travel in the heat of the day. But Hussein was not at ease; he was afraid the Mezeiné would pursue us, and though he said they would neither rob nor plunder us, they would attack his people, and kill some one if they could, in which case we should all have to fight it out. It was very difficult to decide between our disbelief of the whole story, and our wish at the same time not to risk any loss of life through our own obstinacy. Our prudence prevailed over our wishes, and, yielding to the Sheikh's desire, we all moved on with the baggage. The country was

bleak and uninteresting: low rocks and sandy plains, stretching as far as the eye could reach, varied, as usual, here and there by the water-courses, where the desert shrubs grow in great abundance. Towards evening, we passed near some high rocks which, at a distance, looked like ruined castles. Near these, we pitched our tents, on a wide plain, from whence we could see the mountains above Akaba red with the setting sun. I insisted upon having the large tent pitched, much against the wishes of Hussein; and it is clear that something was in the wind, for the people were never quiet. As we passed the high rocks I have mentioned, an Arab left the caravan, and climbed to the tops from whence he could scan the whole plain. We left him lying there, while we encamped. The whole of our march has been like entering and passing through an enemy's country. Our night passed as usual without alarm. In the morning we entered upon the vast plain which stretches away towards Suez on the left, and is bounded on the right by the crags and precipices that overhang the Gulf

of Akaba. After three hours' riding, we arrived at the Hadji road to Mecca from Suez, which leads down to the sea.

Moving on a little, we came upon a magnificent prospect. Below us lay a defile almost perpendicular, down which, in a zig-zag direction, our course lay. Far beneath us, the bright blue waters of the sea were shining in the sun, opposite were the torn and shattered peaks which overhang Akaba; and on our left, far as the eye could reach, stretched away the great Wady Araba, a wide sandy valley between these two ridges of mountains, covered here and there with shrubs and low brushwood, and rising by a gentle ascent, till the eye could follow it no more. Down this bed, now covered with the sands of the desert, the Jordan formerly is supposed to have poured forth its glad waters into the bosom of the deep. At that time, the riches of the East were conveyed along these plains to the Red Sea. Large cities, now buried under the desert drifts, populous and flourishing, carried on their commerce and scattered their

navies over the ocean. This great valley was the channel through which passed caravans of merchandize—the wealth of vast kingdoms. The mighty river, not as yet checked in its course, nor directly ministering to the Divine will, fertilized and enriched the shores. Now the sacred stream is confined to the “land flowing with milk and honey;” the region is deserted and desolate; the very rocks look stricken with ruin. The cities are gone. Their sites even are unknown. Their names exist no more; and you search in vain for Elath and Ezion-Gebir, among the sand-hills of the valley or the palm groves of Akaba.

We descended the rocky pass with difficulty—dismounting from our camels. The precipices and crags on each side rose with surpassing grandeur. The tinting and colours of the mountains were of every hue,—purple and yellow, green, gold, and brown, with endless variety of form, and every shade of colour, arising from the difference and alteration of the several strata, which were piled up and mixed to-

gether in every direction. From the place where we struck from the plain into the Hadji's track, the defile was filled with dead horses. We saw more than two hundred skeletons and carcasses of these poor beasts, and also camels, in every stage of decomposition. On one spot, I counted eight lying together, and the air was poisoned with the smell of carrion. These were the animals which, having borne their masters and burthens to Mecca, had sunk on the return, from famine and fatigue. Provisions are not to be got at Akaba, and when such a vast multitude is on the road, hunger and thirst are alike the portion of man and beast. There are, doubtless, as many human beings, who fall victims, as the animals we see around us, but their remains are covered with a few stones.

At the foot of the pass, we heard the news of what had happened to Messrs. Fiske and Erskine. The Mezeiné, after hearing of the death of the son of their Sheikh, in the first heat of passion, gave chase to the small party who were under Sheikh Sulei-

man's care. This poor fellow was a relation of the murderer. They followed with thirty dromedaries, and overtook them between El-Ain and Nouebe, a village belonging to the Mezeiné, on the sea side. This, it seems, was the reason why they were not in force sufficient to stop us when we marched through the pass. On reaching the party, they stopped and encamped, and then sent one of their number to invite Sheikh Suleiman to a conference, who, after some angry discussion, agreed to hire some of their camels in order to quiet them. At this time he was not aware of their Sheikh's son having been killed. Next morning, when Messrs. Fiske and Erskine were gone to bathe, Sheikh Suleiman baked some bread, and some of the Mezeiné being invited, came and ate with him in his tent, and afterwards enticed him over to their own camp, which was about fifty yards off.

The gentlemen who were bathing, suddenly heard some shots and saw a disturbance in the Mezeiné camp. Being so few in number, they held aloof, but returned in

haste, to receive the dreadful news that Sheikh Suleiman, on going to the Mezeiné camp, had been shot, and nearly cut to pieces. Their own party, panic-stricken and few in numbers, did not dare attack the larger force of the Mezeiné, who mounted their camels and retired slowly to the hills, leaving the mutilated body of the Sheikh on the ground.

The few Arabs of the party, after washing the corpse, laid it in a hollow formed by two stones, upon a hill side. They wrapped him in his turban, and laid him with his face towards Mecca. They repeated no prayer, but at last extending their hands together, murmured a few words over the body; which, before they went away, they arched carefully over with stones, placing the largest at the head and feet.

These details, which were reported by some Howat Arabs, whom we met in the pass, were confirmed by Messrs. Fiske and Erskine, who came to meet us as we rode along the beach to Akaba. They were as much alarmed for our safety as we had

been for theirs, for it was as likely that we should have been attacked with Hussein as they with Saleiman. Had we arrived two days earlier, the catastrophe might have happened to one of our people; or had we taken the same road as Messrs. Fiske and Erskine, we should have probably met the murdering party on their return, and a rencontre would have been the inevitable consequence.

Akaba is a wretched village situated on the sea-shore, exactly at the opening of Wady Araba. When we reached our tent, and were arranging matters, the Governor, or Nazir, marched in, and sat down with half a dozen of his attendants, and with him came the notorious Sheikh of the Alouins and his son Mahommed. They are both remarkable people. The Sheikh dark and scowling, with pointed features and restless eyes; the boy very intelligent and distinguished. Not a word was said about our Petra trip; and after the usual dumb show and civilities, pipes and coffee, they departed. It seems that the other tribes

around Petra have come down in great numbers, in order to force him to engage their camels for us; but he, of course, wishes to make the best bargain for himself. Though the Alouins are the most powerful tribe, they are obliged to pay a certain sum to those through whose country they pass, or else engage their camels, and allow them a share of the profit they make from travellers. Before the Sheikh of the Alouins can pass, he must make his bargain with all these tribes, and it appears that now they have us all in their power, they think we must pay any price to get through. It is certain that this Sheikh has been the whole morning in conference with a host of Bedouins, and, though this council is sitting under the palm trees a good distance from our tents, the noise of their conversation is indescribable; and it is impossible to guess how it will end, for our friends Fiske and Erskine have had no answer. Ten thousand piastres were asked, and they have offered just half that amount. The Sheikh has not even named

a sum to us, and all this day has been lost by their discussion among themselves.

We went to pay the Governor a visit, and found him in the court of the fortress, which is a miserable place, sitting with a ragged-looking retinue under a porch; some carpets were spread there, and pipes and coffee were brought. The usual remarks were translated by our dragoman. I told the governor that I had not heard from the Sheikh of the Alouins, but that if I did not before sunset, I should start by another road. He promised, as well as I could understand, to interfere, and after we left the fortress I saw him and his suite going down to the council of Arabs.

The evening has passed away, and our affairs have come to an abrupt conclusion: the whole day having been spent in discussion by the Alouins and the other Arabs, carried on with the utmost violence and ferocity; the Sheikh of that tribe arrived at my tent to negotiate; and after going through an infinity of details, he concluded by asking 25,000 piastres for our journey. In addition,

we were to make him a present on our arrival at Hebron; to give him a dress, as well as a dress and backshish to eight Sheikhs, and to pay the Fellaheen of Petra. Altogether the price would have amounted to 32,000 piastres. Upon this unheard-of demand I got up and left the tent, having come to the determination of giving up the journey.

The recent squabbles of the Mezeiné, with the Oulad Said, which have ended in the deaths of two men, and which will not be terminated without more blood, have so inflamed the minds of the various tribes, that they are all prepared to tear each other to pieces in jealousy of their respective profits. Even if Hussein were to engage here, at Akaba, to convey us through Petra, it is by no means clear that he has the power to do so. His authority, formerly so great, is now on the wane, and we could have no security in the mountains against further demands. His reply would be, "I told you at Akaba the price for which I could take you securely; you would not give it, and I am unable, as I said to you, to satisfy the intermediate par-

ties." Circumstances may admit of our going to Petra hereafter by way of Hebron; but we are all agreed that in the present state of the tribes, and their extreme rapacity, it would be a bad example for other travellers to give in to their demands, while, on the other hand, our conduct may teach them a lesson which may be useful to those who come after us.

CHAPTER XVI.

**Sheikh of the Alouins and his Son — Bedouins rushing
to Action — Chiefs of the Howát Tribe — The
Desert.**



CHAPTER XVI.

JUNE 3rd.—The Sheikh having requested a second interview, I received him and his son in my tent, making them sit on each side of me, and desired that no one else should enter. After pipes and coffee, the Sheikh quietly asked when I meant to go, and on my replying that I could not afford his price, he said that many Sheikhs of the intermediate tribes had come down expressly for our journey, that he had been at a great expense in keeping their camels and his own, waiting at Akaba. The terms he had proposed were the lowest, but he would go for nothing, for all that *he* had was mine, if I would only pay the other Sheikhs their demands.

I assured him that I would do nothing without a written contract, signed and made out before the Governor; that I would not trust myself to a man who was determined to impose such exorbitant terms; I was disposed to give a fair price, but I added that it was entirely an affair of commerce between us, and that he might take or refuse the matter as he chose, and so might I.

While this debate was going on, it was curious to watch the play of Hussein's face, and the restless eye which never for a moment was fixed upon an object. He looked at everything in the tent, but never in my face. The young chief, who was on my left, watched everything I did, never took his glance from me, and evidently was as deeply interested in the matter as if he had been thirty years older. Mohammed's countenance, without being handsome, is very remarkable, and one not easily forgotten; possessing singular brightness about the eye, and a sinister smile. I heard him laugh once, but it was a joyless sound; the echo

of another's hilarity rather than a demonstration of his own. His figure is perfect; tall, slender, and very muscular. We had seen him in the morning as he was going into the sea to bathe; his red caftan falling off his shoulders, and his long tresses of hair, like a woman's, hanging over it. After another ineffectual attempt on his part to induce me to accede to his proposal, another Sheikh, by name Abondjazi, made his appearance, and took his seat in the tent in a manner very different from the well-bred coolness of Hussein.

Long pauses took place, and little was said. The pipes were going continually, and the Sheikh was apparently reflecting; we all thought he would come to terms. The two Sheikhs then began to talk across me; I took a book and paid no sort of attention to them. They continued smoking, and, as I was weary of the conference, I said I was going to see the Governor's garden. Upon this, they got up. Hussein had previously got possession of one of my handkerchiefs, in a manner

more creditable to his ingenuity than his honesty, and observing on my bed a green cachemire, as he passed the door, he asked Mahmoud if it was for him; the latter seemed about to choke with the exclamation he made in Arabic,—evidently not a civil one. I was glad to be relieved from this bird of prey.

Previously to this visit, the little Nazir had come to the tent for his present. He carried a string of beads in his hand, but nothing denoted his authority or his military honours; he had not even a sword. His servant brought us a cargo of unripe melons and pomegranates, and on my asking where they came from, said the garden was behind the fortress. On our way thither, we saw a most picturesque figure of a child, dressed like a Sheikh, riding a very tall dromedary; several of these useful beasts were lying under some date-trees, surrounded by a crowd of Alouins. They were in far better condition than our Mount Sinai animals, and their saddles and trappings looked in better

order, and altogether more solid and useful. The men, too, are far more careful in their dress; their caftans are cleaner, and of a superior fabric; their arms and accoutrements are far better; and the stripes of their clothing, with the kefia on the head, which they all wear, give them an air of grace and wild beauty which must be seen in the desert to be understood and appreciated.

On entering the little man's garden, we found about a dozen palm-trees fenced in by a bank of sand, and some dry branches, with a sort of arbour in the middle. Under the stems of these trees the produce of the garden was supposed to grow. Whether he had stripped it entirely for us I know not, but he seemed to meet with great difficulty in his search after cucumbers and water-melons to present to us. After concluding our visit, we strolled to the beach to bathe. On a sudden a shot was fired at a distance. Not a minute elapsed before an Arab of our people ran from the palm-trees, near the town where they were encamped, at full

speed along the shore, gun in hand, and passed us. Another and another succeeded, and then a rush of about twenty, all hurrying at the top of their pace. Toualeb now came up, and told us that our Arabs, hearing the shot, fancied that some others were attacking their camels, which were feeding in the direction of the sound. At this moment another shot was heard, and now there was a general scurry from all quarters of the grove. Out came the Alouins in full force, some mounted on their dromedaries, two or three upon a camel, others running and screeching—all armed to the teeth. Toualeb, who had gone for his camel, passed us again; and now came the mighty garrison of Akaba behind, running not half as well as the Bedouins, and clearly not liking the job. There were at least five hundred men on foot, as well as on camels and dromedaries, who rapidly passed us, evidently expecting an immediate fray.

Last of all came young Mohammed. The boyish chief was galloping on a milk white dromedary. He took no notice of us as we

sat on the sand while all the multitude were passing. He had a double-barrelled gun slung round him, and was belabouring his camel and shouting like a madman. I never saw a more striking sight than the sudden rush of Bedouins into action, or what they supposed to be one. The Alouins were three hundred strong. They had forty dromedaries and innumerable camels. Our people were about fifty. The Howats, and Amrans, and other stray visitants at Akaba, made up the number.

The first Arabs soon returned, assuring us it was all right, and that no camels were missing. At first, it struck us that the Alouins might have tried to drive off the Oulad Said's camels in order to prevent our starting. And I suspect Toualeb thought the same, as our people were the first to rush to the field, while after them came the Alouins, shouting and brandishing their lances and guns, and the whole host of Arabs on foot, rushing to the spot where the camels had been left. Be this as it may, we all returned pell-mell to the tents. On the

way, young Mohammed passed me, and making his camel stop and kneel down, got off and came to salute us with the most perfect grace. Then turning, he remounted, and away went the young chief and his milk-white dromedary.

Before we reached the tents, we heard about fifty shots in quick succession, and coming up, found all the soldiers of the fort and a host of Arabs firing off their guns.

June 4th.—About eight this morning, we put all in marching order, our fellow-travellers doing the same, as we had agreed to move off together. We thought it not unlikely that so large a body of people as were collected at Akaba, would resist or resent our passing out of their lands, and that the disappointment of losing so much profit might perhaps incite some of the fiery spirits among them to make our departure as disagreeable as possible. No such thing, however, took place. Soon after daylight the Nazir and his suite came to the tents, and as mine was not open, quietly squatted down near the kitchen—which, as usual, was in the

open air—prying into everything and seeking what they could devour. I heard afterwards that Hussein, of the Alouins, had come with some abatement of terms, but as we had made up our minds to proceed, and as, on the last negotiation with our friends, he had, contrary to their expectation, declared that he would not lessen his price, there was no use in beginning new discussions and losing another day. We were told by our friends that they had passed him on their way to us, and that hearing some conversation between him and the man whose conduct they were under, they asked what he said, and were told that he exclaimed—“Take care, when you bring travellers here again, to send back your camels the next day, or else look to it!”—a menace which clearly showed the disappointment he felt. Meantime, we paced quietly along the shore, the baggage following behind, and began slowly to ascend the long pass we had come down on our way to Akaba.

The murder of Suleiman, and the previous attack on and death of the Mezeiné Sheikh's

son, on account of disputes and jealousies about the right of transit through their country, has set the neighbouring tribes in a state of revolution, and all are for asserting their rights. I do not apprehend the least danger for ourselves, but at any moment, in passing through the country of another tribe, the caravan of the traveller may be stopped by the natives of the district, who may enforce conditions upon the tribe he is with to engage a certain number of their camels, and in default of this, a scuffle and bloodshed may be the consequence. This, however, seems a natural state of things; for the Arabs in general think they all have a fair right to profit by the conveyance of strangers through their country; and it is perfectly true that in case of plunder or loss, the government would render them, and not the tribe in attendance on the traveller, responsible.

Continuing our course along the Hadji road, towards Cairo, we came about sunset, into a plain surrounded by peaked hills, of no great height in themselves, never-

theless, at a considerable elevation from the sea. Here we encamped for the night, but presently were disturbed by the arrival of a large body of Arabs, who created great confusion. Three of them shortly made their appearance in the tent, and after the usual salutations took their seats. These were the chiefs of the Howât tribe, whose territory we had entered. I found that they expected us to engage them and their camels, but I lost no time in giving them to understand that my arrangements were with the Oulad Said, to whom I referred them. They then departed. On my remonstrating with Hussein and Toualeb respecting these demands, they made all possible professions and excuses, and so the matter terminated for the present, though I heard constant patrols round our tent, and it seems the Howâts kept guard on us all night.

June 5th.—This morning, to my surprise, I found a body of Howâts accompanying Toualeb and ourselves. They kept apart, and though they saluted us, were evidently

sulky and out of temper. It became, therefore, clear that the Oulad Said had made no terms with them, in spite of their promises. The Howâts were fine-looking men, in costume resembling the Alouins, and far better equipped and dressed, and with more able dromedaries than the Oulad Said. As they rode on in silence, it became quite essential to bring matters to an issue, and after consulting with our fellow travellers, I ordered the tent to be pitched, informing Toualeb and Hussein, who evidently had not come to terms, that if they did not make an arrangement with the Howâts, we should not move a step further. There was much hesitation, upon which I sent for the Sheikh of the Howâts, and, before our English friends, made the parties understand, as well as I could, through the wretched interpretation of our servants, that I would have nothing to do with their differences, which must be settled among themselves, but that we would not stir till an assurance was received from all parties that the matter was concluded. Upon this, they both emphatically declared

that all was arranged. The Oulad Said were to take four camels from the Howâts, and we were to proceed to Daharieh without further hindrance or dispute. They said there was only the Tiyayah tribe between us and Daharieh, and that they also had been already treated with, so that we have now the assurance of Toualeb, the Sheikh of the Howâts, and the Sheikh of the Tiyayah, for our safe conduct.

We continued our course towards Nackel, passing through a considerable excavation in the rocks,—the work of Sultan Tomaun, according to our guides,—upon which are several Turkish inscriptions. Nothing strikes the eye in the desert, but its immensity. We see boundless plains, varied here and there by darker or lighter strata, and occasionally abrupt and peaked hills stretching in ridges across the wide expanse. All are low, but of curious forms, such as might belong to the extinct craters of a volcano.

We journeyed on quietly, accompanied by the Howâts, who seem good-humoured, and more willing and docile, as well as

thankful, than the Oulad Said, who, perhaps, have been spoiled by travellers. The Howâts have rarely escorted Europeans.

There is evidently a marked change in Hussein's manner since the death of Suleiman. He seems absorbed in thought, and to have lost his usual alacrity and spirits; perhaps, he cannot forget his own narrow escape, or is meditating plans of vengeance and retaliation.

June 6th.—We have left the Hadji road to Cairo. From the wells, which are a day's journey from Nackel, we altered our course, and are now pointing due North, towards the great and terrible wilderness. We are entering the Desert of Paran.

June 7th.—Yesterday we encamped earlier than usual. The Arabs had discovered a quantity of rain-water which had collected in a sort of pool, near which there was food for their camels. The day's journey was prolonged through the same unchanging scene. The desert lay like a vast sea before and around us,—the peaks and mountains looking like islands, and the ranges of hills

like continents upon its bosom. The rocks are of a glaring white colour—here and there varying into yellow. In this desolate waste nothing is seen to move but an occasional hare or lizard; nor is there anything upon which to repose the eye, except the few and stunted bushes that mark the hollows. This, indeed, is desert, with all its attributes. It is very different to the high road to Suez, or the deep and sheltered Wadys near Mount Sinai, for here no object breaks the blast or keeps off the intense heat.



CHAPTER XVII.

Arab Superstition—Bedouins of the Tiyayah—Attack upon our Caravan—Ruins of El Ouji—Caravan of Camels—Remains of Rehaibe—Ruins of Elusa.



CHAPTER XVII.

JUNE 8.—The morning broke, fine and misty, the clouds were resting on the distant hills, and we went our way with a gentle breeze and a moderate temperature till we reached our halting-place in a small Wady, spotted over with scattered brushwood. Last night, we passed a tomb of a saint, where our Bedouins got off, and after saying their prayers took up the dust and scattered it upon their turbans. Our friends tell us, that, after they had bestowed a goat upon their guides, they found all their camels marked with crosses of blood. This custom is, I think, mentioned by Robinson; the Arabs declared they did it to ensure a prosperous journey.

June 9th.—We encamped last night in a sheltered spot, near which a gentle rise led into a small valley almost shut in between the hills, where grass was growing scantily. The rest of the ground was covered with low brushwood, but in greater abundance than we had as yet seen. A large rushy hollow contained some water, which was muddy and very disagreeable to the taste. Before we retired to sleep, we were informed that it was considered necessary to place guards all round the camp, as there were robbers in the vicinity, and that as we were on the borders of the territory of the Tiyayah tribe, if they did not make an open attack they would attempt to pilfer. In consequence of this strange warning—more strange because we had in company with us the alleged representative of that tribe, who had journeyed in our caravan from Akaba, at which time he declared upon the faith of his head, that all was settled with every tribe upon our march—we lay down with our arms near us, and surrounded by watch-

fires, within ten yards all round the tent. Before we could sleep, Mahmoud informed us that the Tiyayah tribe had made their appearance and desired to share with the Oulad Said in loading the camels. This, as I have said before, means either that the passing tribe are to pay, or that they are to unload so many camels of their own and hire the camels of the tribe they are passing through.

At six o'clock this morning I ascended a little hill above the encampment, without arms or stick, or any weapon either for show or defence. Just as I crossed the ridge, I found myself close to a dozen Bedouins of the Tiyayah, all with their matches lighted, and skulking under the rocks. On seeing me they advanced, and without taking the least notice, quietly sat down behind some crags, each taking up a position which commanded our encampment, and laid their matchlocks upon the stones. It was easy to guess that these were the demanders of tribute from the Oulad Said.

They did not molest or meddle with me, and I sat down close by them, to watch what they did.

Meantime there was a great noise and confusion below, some mounted men had arrived, and to my surprise, another hill opposite us was in the same way occupied by armed Bedouins, with their guns pointed. There was evidently no intention of ill-using *us*, but the dispute was with our tribe, and was likely to produce an almost interminable wrangle. And so it turned out, for though I was permitted to reach the camp unmolested, I found it had become a scene of noise and strife. The quarrel had begun in earnest, and Hussein and Toualeb, apparently powerless, together with our companion the old Tiyayah man, were surrounded on all sides by mobs of Arabs, all screeching and shouting, disputing, furiously gesticulating, and pointing very significantly to the two places which commanded the camp, where the long matchlocks were ranged ominously over the rocks.

For the two hours it lasted, our English

friends and ourselves were totally unable to quell the tumult. Our servants were almost useless, their utmost care being necessary to keep together our baggage, which by degrees was disappearing, as these harpies advanced nearer and endeavoured to load their camels before the Oulad Said. Matters went on thus for some time. We had no fear of personal violence, but there was a very unpleasant feeling that we were here in the very heart of the desert, in the midst of the Ishmaelites, who, even if they held our persons and baggage sacred, might make war upon each other before our faces, and that the sad scene of Suleiman's death might be re-enacted upon a larger stage, and with even more fatal consequences.

At last, there was an impetuous rush from the noisiest of the circles towards the spot where we stood, and a party of the new comers attempted to take the camels on which we rode. We resisted for awhile amid a torrent of expletives on all sides; the din was terrific, every one speaking at once, and excited to a pitch of frenzy that seemed

ungovernable. All the Oulad Said's camels were unloaded, our baggage was taken up and scattered piecemeal over the camp; one fellow carrying a box, another a bed, a third a hamper, to their respective camels. The Oulad Said had yielded to the pressure of circumstances, and we were to submit.

Meantime another attack was made on the dromedaries we rode; the new comers insisting on having the whole cargo,—ourselves being as good loads, in their opinion, as anything else. Poor Mr. Fiske, in a struggle, was thrown from his dromedary, and had a very narrow escape, while the Bedouins were trying to make the beast kneel down in order to change his burden; so matters grew worse and worse. At last, when the scramble was finished, and our baggage heaped on the fresh camels, there being scarcely a rope or a thong to hold the packages among the spoilers, Hussein came and begged us to go on.

We moved forward, accordingly, at a slow pace, surrounded by the mixed multitude; some who had come with us, and others who

had joined us at the commencement of the affray. We were still mounted on our own camels, and so were Hussein and Toualeb; but those of the servants had been changed in the first attack. We had not proceeded far before some shots were fired by the Bedouins on the hill before us, not, I believe, with intent to kill, but to produce an effect which certainly was immediate; for the Oulad Said camels, our late conveyance, who had been following the new comers at a small distance, moved off to the left of the road. Hussein joined them; there was another movement, and then an Arab suddenly seized the bridle of my dromedary, and brought him upon his knees; our friends, also, were at once dismounted. I must do the aggressors the justice to say that they used no violence, and it appeared as though they were excited to act as they had done from eagerness to have their camels loaded.

In this last rush, while I was in the middle of the Arabs, calling to Hussein to come and recover my dromedary, one of the Bedouins put a belt and powder-horn

round my neck. When Hussein returned with my dromedary, after a long discussion, in which I saw for the first time that both he and Toualeb had lost their presence of mind, I followed slowly the wild group that preceded us. So we rode on, after this savage-looking escort, with high words and loud disputing. Afterwards came our baggage, hastily and roughly huddled together on the new camels, followed by a host of Bedouins, some without arms; others with long sticks only, the rest with knives and guns; every now and then, as they passed, scowling at us in a manner by no means prepossessing. However, we did not much care, except for our provisions and trunks, which had a very good chance of being carried across the desert, safe from either Pacha or Sultan.

But a change soon took place in the scene; suddenly, when words rose to the highest in the group before us, one of the speakers struck off the path on his camel, and, taking a branch Wady, went at full speed till we lost sight of him. He was followed by five

or six more, and these messengers were scudding along the plain, right and left, in different directions. Having no one with us to speak, for our servants were behind, we could only watch the course of matters without understanding their drift.

Our route lay along a flat waste of sand, enclosed by hills, occasionally intersected by small tributary valleys. Towards these recesses of the desert, the messengers were making their way, and the fruit of their errand soon became manifest. About two miles before us was a gentle rise in the plain, and as we approached it, there were hastening from every side fresh parties of Arabs, who, by the time we were within gun-shot, had taken up their position, posted behind their camels, that were lying down on the height, with their guns pointed.

This was an unforeseen obstacle, but we soon found out that the new enemy were the relations and friends of the old Tiyayah Arab, who had brought us into the country on the faith of his promise, and when he found the Oulad Said's camels had been

taken by another branch of his tribe, he determined to rescue them. Thus there was a split between the people who had already taken us, and a larger portion of the tribe. Hussein and Toualeb, once more in their glory, told us that now all was right, and that we were to proceed round the base of the rise; but, in the meantime, the baggage would be unloaded by our new defenders. The remedy was worse than the disease here, for all the loading and unloading and scrambling had to be renewed. However, there was nothing for it but to do as we were desired.

Our Sinai Sheikhs clearly supposed that they would now be permitted by their new allies to load their own camels. This, however, they soon discovered to be a delusion; for the rescuers at once insisted upon taking all the caravan into their own hands, and Hussein was no further advanced, after all the delay, squabbling, and firing, than he was at first. Now again they tried to get us to dismount. We held on, however, as well as we could, and contrived, in the midst

of confusion and shouting, to reach our mid-day halt.

Here I took my stand, and finding out, upon inquiry, that the whole affair proceeded from Hussein's avarice, as he was unwilling to pay for his passage through the country, I told him that he must at once and without further excuse settle the point amicably with the other tribes, adding, that I thought the whole proceeding towards me on the part of himself and his tribe, in having first undertaken to bring us safely through the desert, and then, from his own love of money, getting us into these disagreeable positions, was disgraceful in the extreme, and that I would not fail to make his conduct known in proper quarters.

As usual, he came humble and submissive, and promised all I desired; said, as he had done fifty times before, that there should be no more disputes. On this, I reminded him that I had been twice compelled to dismount from his own dromedary, and assured him that unless he brought the Sheikh of the Tiyayahs to my tent (as had been done be-

fore in the case of the Howâts), and that they both declared that all was settled, I would not move.

In half an hour, an old man arrived, who entered the angry circle of disputants near the tents. The Bedouins got up to receive him, and all sat down again, and renewed their discussion. Soon after, Hussein announced the conclusion of a treaty. The Oulad Said were to pay, and be allowed to reload their camels and pass on. In vain I asked why this was not done in the morning. In vain it was to explain that I had rather have paid than have been subjected to all the annoyance. It was of no use questioning them; either they did not understand me, or would not. Meantime, the newcomer asked to pay us a visit, and I received his positive assurance that there should be no more stopping and disputes. To the same effect I also received Hussein's pledge, which by this time, as it seems worth nothing, I am very tired of.

This place is called Wady Seram, and the encampment of last night was in Wady-el-

Meneileh. The Arab who had settled the disputes desired to present us with a goat, which we accepted, after giving him something in return, and he is to accompany us as far as Daharieh. Certainly, his mediation has done good, for the angry crowds have dispersed, camel after camel has left us, the Oulad Said are round us once more, and our tents are quiet after the stormiest and most noisy day I ever passed.

June 10th.—We set off this morning in peace, which, after the last two days, is an event worth recording. I determined to visit the ruins called El Oujj by the Arabs, or Abde, probably Eboda, a Roman city. About three miles from our encampment, and to the left of our track, we saw what seemed to be the remains of a ruined castle. The site is high and commanding, being nearly the centre of a plain surrounded by low and distant hills. As we approached, our track lay through a watercourse, from which occasionally we diverged into small patches of recent cultivation, intersected by walls and ruins of stone fences of much more skilful

construction than Arab hands could have produced.

The surface of the ground bears marks of severe rains. The watercourse looks like the bed of a torrent, and is covered with large stones. Above this, on a steep acclivity, stand the shattered remnants of a castle and a church, the former marked by its strong position and the thickness of the walls that still remain, with here and there some wooden beams, not even yet decayed or softened, though exposed to weather and climate; the latter appears clearly to have been a place of worship by the recesses near and the space for the high altar. The masonry is excellent yet, though broken masses of columns and capitals fill up the interior. Nothing is left to show accurately the style of the building. Indeed, there is little to see here, to tempt either the artist or the savant, except he be curious to behold a ruined city in a waste of sand, and speculate upon its origin and fate.

There is a large square well in the castle, formerly used probably as a reservoir, for

the Arabs declared there were no springs near. Two others, also, were to be seen among the ruins of houses, which lie beneath the castle, and near the watercourse; but these are hollowed out of the rock, and served probably as cisterns in which a supply was accumulated in the rainy season. However, it is extraordinary how this city of Eboda, if Eboda it be, could have existed without a regular supply of water, not only for its own consumption, but for the irrigation of the surrounding soil, and I am inclined to think either that there must be springs somewhere unknown to the Arabs, or that in former times the watercourse, now dried up, has been a stream too copious to be affected by heat, so as to disappear in summer.

We resumed our route across the plain, towards some mounds of deep sand. On entering this track, we found the face of the country changing. All around us were low banks covered with stunted bushes, so as to give the waste the appearance of a common, studded at intervals with furze-bushes.

Gradually we came upon traces of cultivation; at last, we saw something like a crop of wheat, in the midst of the desert. These patches increase as we leave the higher grounds and approach more inhabited regions. Camels are browsing occasionally with flocks of goats; and veiled ladies, with bare legs, afford some signs of life.

We passed a caravan of camels laden with produce going to Hebron. The Arabs were of quite a different character to those we have seen, poorly dressed, and half starved, with only one gun among four or five, some children and goats, apparently with their camel, their whole property. They cut but a poor figure near our fierce looking cortège, which increases like a snow-ball, for at every halt in the desert we have picked up a few stragglers, and our numbers are now so formidable, that I think we might besiege Daharieh, if we were all of one mind. But they are the vultures, kites, and crows, that seeing the carcass gather together. They travel along with us to obtain a present, or perhaps to seize upon some of the gains of

our Sinai Arabs, in which pious effort I hope they may succeed. No people ever more richly deserved to be fleeced.

After two hours of uninteresting ground, we crossed Wady-el-Lebyad. Near this watercourse, as we passed the tomb of Sheikh Amre, our old Tiyayah friend, who is now taken as one of the guides, instead of praying in the usual manner, cried out "Shitan" and spat upon it.

Leaving our mid-day camp, we remarked at every step the altered character of the country. The desert was passed. We had traversed the heart of the Paran wilderness, the great, the terrible, I should add, the howling, for surely we had heard more of this quality within its precincts, than at any other period of our lives. Large flats, covered by scanty and parched-up grass, mingled with brushwood, begin to show themselves stretching out before us, and occasionally hills of rock and stony ridges appear, but they are fewer and less rugged.

Winding along Wady Lebyad, we arrived at our camp in Wady Khulasah. The tents

were pitched upon a small plain, sheltered by some low cliffs of sand.

To-day we passed Rehaibe. There is a small building here, of which the masonry is more perfect than anything else in its neighbourhood, but the original structure has been converted into a mosque by the imposition of a dome upon the original stonework square, of plastered clay, something like that which defaces the little temple of Amada, in Nubia. The plain above it is a continuous mass of stones, overthrown and heaped together without form or shape; not even the spaces of streets or large buildings are left. The briars spread everywhere, and it was not without difficulty that we made our way among the heaps of rubbish. But though we hunted for inscriptions, or something that would tell the tale of what had been, our labour was in vain, and after looking into some old wells, which are the most perfectly preserved relics the scene can boast of, we left Rehaibe without rescuing it from the oblivion which has befallen even its name.

It is of considerable extent, and must have contained a very large population for a city of the desert, "where no water is." Here, as at Eboda, the water may also have been kept in reservoirs, but I cannot help thinking that, in later years, the supplies, either from streams or water-courses, or winter rains, may have become scarce, and that the people migrated to moister regions and more favoured soil, leaving their parched up cities to be covered by the sands of the desert, for no history or tradition tells of the destruction of these places. Both Eboda and Rehaibe appear to be of Roman construction.

Near our present camp are the ruins of another city, called Elusa, which, like the others, are scattered over the plain, without a single edifice or particle of one standing to bear witness that the stones which lie there were once the dwellings of men. But there is nothing at all interesting in these sites, except their having been so rarely visited. After Karnac and Medinet Habou they are but pigmy ruins, and seem the

towns of little men—mere baby-houses after those we have been used to. The water of Wady Khulasa is brackish and bad, and was so disturbed by the camels, that it was not even possible to wash in it. Our own stock was very fetid, but this we were forced to swallow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Beersheba — Pastoral Arabs — Wells — Daharieh —
Hebron — Turkish Soldiers — Plains of Mamre —
Edroua.



CHAPTER XVIII.

JUNE 11th.—All hail Palestine! We have, at length, set foot upon this sacred soil, and our wanderings in the desert are nearly over. It is scarcely possible to enter upon the precincts of the Holy Land without a deep feeling of veneration, and thoughts most probably of a very different nature from any to which the mind has been devoted. The valley here is called Wady Seba, the well is Bir Seba. From Elusa or Khulasa the region becomes at every step more open and cheerful. Small round hills, with grass, in the intervening valleys, are beginning to show themselves. The surface of the country is undulating,

and the track winds along the hollows. We have seen several small varieties of wild flowers, and a species of orange-coloured anemone everywhere covers the ground. The plains are alive with goats, and camels are pasturing in the valleys.

The wells are situated in the centre of a declivity, towards which the neighbouring hills slope gently down. Here we found goats, sheep, camels, and asses, in vast droves, collected around the spot, and the Bedouins of the country were busily drawing water for their flocks. These pastoral Arabs must be rich in flocks and herds, like the patriarchs of old who dwelt on this spot. And how little has the scene changed! Here, as in the day when the well was digged, come flocks of sheep and goats to slake their thirst. The Arab of to-day draws water for them in the same manner as Jacob for Laban's flocks at the well of Haran. The country seems to have undergone no change, though nations have passed away, and empires have been overturned; for the well of Birseba still remains amid

the hills, without a dwelling or habitation near, except the black tents of the Arabs, which are there for awhile and to-morrow are gone.

The people draw water with a peculiar chaunt, rather musical than otherwise. A totally different class from the Bedouins, they are unarmed, and apparently quiet and inoffensive. They do not appear inquisitive, or approach us in expectation of getting something, like our actual escort. This district somewhat resembles parts of the Scottish border, after a hot and parching summer. The long sweeping undulations and more sheltered hollows must be covered with grass in the rainy season, for even now, though dry and parched, there is an abundance to show what has been.

Not a tree is to be seen. The mountains of Judæa are before us, rising above the hills near Hebron. Every mile we advance upon our path appears hallowed, connected as it is by a thousand links with all that the Christian believes and venerates; and as I sit here in my tent, watching the herds

of cattle upon the hills, and listening to the cry of the shepherds, drawing water for them before they travel up to the higher mountains and more distant valleys, I enjoy the conviction that upon the same scene Abraham must have gazed, that Isaac must have trodden this valley, and that Jacob left it only for the sake of finding Rachel.

We found around our tents the ruins of houses, and the marks of old foundations were to be seen on both sides of the bed of the dried-up brook which passes through the valley. The remains of an old wall were here, the lower part of which had been built with rubble, and upon it was a superstructure of solid masonry apparently contemporary with Elusa and Rehaibe, so that the home of the patriarchs has been inhabited by the conqueror and the heathen. But these are gone, and the place that knew them knows them no more, while, from age to age, the record of the first fathers has been handed down imperishable as divine truth.

The wells are both similar in their form

which is circular, and more than one hundred feet deep, about sixteen wide, and built of solid stones to a certain depth, where the rock begins in which they are hollowed out. The sides of the opening of the wells, of which there exist two, at about a hundred yards from one another, are grooved with the marks of ropes. These superstructures appear of a later date than the wells beneath; and around them are small troughs of stone for the cattle to drink out of, which seem to be very ancient.

Leaving Beersheba, we rode over a country entirely covered with grass, consisting of long slopes with round knolls, and wide savannahs stretching away in all directions, until we reached our camp, about three hours distance from Daharieh. This appears to be entirely a pastoral district, and as yet there are no signs of any habitations except the occasional tents we have passed, and some caves which serve as dwellings for the shepherds.

June 12th.—We arrived at Daharieh, and found our tents pitched under some olive-

trees near the town, which is a miserable heap of ruins. It appears to have once been a large village, with either a church or castle occupying the highest ground. Before we arrived, the track wound round the grassy hills as before, and so closed in was it at last, that we had no prospect whatever of the surrounding country. After a pleasant ride, we saw the village on an eminence before us, surrounded by some cultivated fields, in which were growing corn, tobacco, onions, and olive-trees, with some hedges of the cactus. Here a portion of the harvest was being gathered in, and the people were busy threshing the grain, as it came from the reaping. There were also plenty of oxen to be seen here, the first we had met since we left the plains of Egypt.

The time had now arrived for a final settlement with Hussein, and our escort of the Oulad Said, and, for the benefit of future travellers, I took them roundly to task for the inconvenience we had experienced. However, matters were at last amicably adjusted. We did not forget the old Tiyayah,

who had so well protected us in his own country, whose name I found was Nasr Fanous, and we took leave of our friend the Arab, whose timely visit quelled the disturbance, who left us here with the Sheikh of the Howâts and his two companions.

June 13th.—Great was the confusion this morning with our new conductors, the camel drivers of Daharieh. We had agreed to take four horses and fourteen camels from here to Jerusalem; but after the bargain was made, the Sheikh of the camels as usual increased his demands, and we were forced unwillingly to submit. The camels are larger and stouter than the desert breed, and the horses well bred and tractable. Before we marched off, Hussein came alone to our tent, evidently very much distressed. The old man first kissed my hand, and then repeated the ceremony on both cheeks as his eyes glistened with tears. He blessed us, and wished us a happy journey, and begged we would remember him, and not speak harshly of him. When I took my last farewell of him, I did it in kindness, and often

I shall remember him, in spite of our misadventures under his guidance, with great interest and good wishes.

After a beautiful ride we reached Hebron, or El Khalil; the track to it led us through low stony hills, covered with dwarf pines, prickly oak, junipers and shrubs in great variety. At times our path lay amongst gnarled trees, springing out from the clefts of rocks, or decking the cultivated patches in the valleys, among which cattle, goats, and sheep were feeding. We also passed several wells of good water. The country is marked by the ruins of walls and old fences of stone, with foundations of houses. The vestiges of terraces are to be traced along the slopes of the hills; but the vines, the olive, and the fig-tree have given place to the natural wood of the region. This district must have been thickly populated, and bears the signs of cultivation as high as the summits of the rocks. But these fields are now left to their original wildness. The habitations are destroyed, and the landmarks thrown down.

Hebron is situated on a declivity, and is larger and better built than we had expected. In the middle of the town, more conspicuous than any other building, stands the mosque, which covers the remains of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Rebecca. No Christian is allowed to penetrate its precincts; we were obliged, therefore, to content ourselves with a distant view.

Our tent was pitched outside the town; within an orchard of olives of very respectable antiquity. Near us were a body of Turkish soldiers reposing under the shade of the trees. They were better dressed than the Egyptians, having very tight trousers for Mussulmen, and were it not for their large Constantinople tarboush we should scarcely have remarked the difference between them and European troops.

Very soon two sergeants entered the tent, and coolly sat down. I waited quietly for the attack, supposing it was an affair of quarantine. But no such thing happened: On the contrary, they were very quiet and well-behaved, with the exception of pulling

about our swords, pistols, &c., and asking what each was worth. We had no dragoman with us, our baggage not having as yet arrived; therefore there were no means of sending them away, and as we were not very sure what might be in store for us, we did not choose to provoke any hostility. One of them took up my pipe, and was going to fill it from his own bag; to this, however, I objected. He took the interposition quietly, and, to our satisfaction, they very soon left us.

A few minutes afterwards arrived the Governor of the district, having civilly sent in before his approach to ask if we wanted anything. I found him quiet and well-mannered. He asked us about our journey, and told us, if we wished to go to Petra, he could arrange it without difficulty. I promised to return to Hebron, if I made up my mind to go back to Petra, and that I would profit by his civility. This man had lost an eye at the battle of Nezib, fighting against Ibrahim Pacha. It is curious to observe how terrified the Turks appear at the rumours of the reinstatement in Syria of

Mehemet Ali's rule. They all know that order would then be restored, and such is their fear of the means whereby this is to be accomplished, that they regard it with almost as much dread as the arrival of the last judgment.

As we left Hebron, a track presented itself to the left of the town, partly made upon the bare rock, and partly upon large stones heaped together, with great holes and heaps of flint, rendering the passage very difficult for our beasts.

It is scarcely possible to conceive anything more striking than the beginning of the road to Jerusalem from this abode of the patriarchs. Large vineyards extend on each side, with olive grounds, gardens of figs and pomegranates, and fruit of various kinds. Each hill round which the traveller winds, is encircled by tiers of terraces partly made in the native rock to support the soil, partly with old remains of former sites, and in many places with modern masonry. To every vineyard there appears to have been a tower, as we are told in Scripture.

We passed a burying place with ancient arches, and a fountain overshadowed by magnificent oaks, of the same kind as those we have so frequently seen mixed with olives and thick copsewood. After a ride of three miles, as we looked back upon the plains of Mamre, we could not but acknowledge that nature, unassisted by man, had been beneficent to a wonderful degree to this region. In other days, those who dwelt here were obedient to her laws, and made more of the soil. The bunches of grapes are not so large as those of Eshcol, but the vine still hangs in large clusters from the rocks above our head and around our path, and the harvest ripens and spreads over a vast extent of ground, and fills the neighbouring valleys, though the crops are poor and scanty. However, there are few patches that are not turned to some account. The higher hills, which as we proceed almost close around us, are covered with copses of various sorts of trees, and between them stretch away the silent glens and dingles, which are extremely

picturesque, and from their very loneliness, sheltered amid these wilds, tempt the weary traveller to halt awhile, forget the Bedouins, the Arab, and the Moslem, and be at rest.

After two hours' march we found our tents pitched in a field close to the ruins of what appeared to be an old church, near which was an abundant spring. We walked over the rocks surrounding us, and soon found another flowing out of the bosom of the rock. Near it, hewn in the ledge of stone, were several cavities exactly similar to the tombs excavated in the cliffs upon the Nile, and in other parts of Egypt; some of these we entered, and found places hollowed in the rock for interment, as we had seen before. What connexion could there have been between these excavations and their Egyptian prototypes?

This place is called Edroua. I do not see why the field which Abraham bought of Ephraim the Hittite, and the cave of Macpelah which was *before*, not *in*, Mamre, might not have been upon this very

spot. If another idea is to be started, may not Edroua, be Edar, where Jacob pitched his tent near the tower, which is still there?

CHAPTER XIX.

Bethlehem — The Convent, and its different Religious Communities—Prospect of Jerusalem—Armenian Convent—Valley of Jehoshaphat—The Great Mosque—The Convent Church—Protestant Congregation.



CHAPTER XIX.

JUNE 14th. — We left Edroua at our usual time, and continued our track through the same scenery of coppice and rocks mixed with cultivation. The arbutus and prickly oak together make a very thick cover, and other trees are mingled with them, so that the shades of green are of every hue. About three hours and a half from Edroua, we came upon El Bourg, where the pools of Solomon are situated. Visiting these immense reservoirs, we admired their size and skilful construction. There is a large Khan or building for the accommodation of pilgrims, near the upper pool.

The country now becomes more bare and rugged, and the hills more naked; copse-wood disappears, and rocks and stones alone surround the path. The track to Bethlehem is difficult and rough, passing over beds of limestone and flint, among broken fragments of stone.

About three miles from the pools we came in sight of the birthplace of our Saviour, which stands on a steep acclivity, commanding on every side an extensive prospect. Half the town is in ruins,—the houses are huddled together, and the streets fall of dirt, and resounding with the usual accompaniments of noise and wrangles among the populace. There was a great disturbance near the convent gate, and for some time we could not pass; though there is no great danger in these disputes, which, after all, end in nothing but bad language on all sides.

Bethlehem looks down upon smiling terraces of figs and vines; olive trees are scattered about in great profusion, but the agricultural produce seems but scanty, and

the few fields which are under crop are neglected and badly looked after. The convent is an irregular building, in which three sects of monks reside, who divide the Church and its contents between them. These are Greek, Armenian, and Latin. We fell to the share of the latter. Some delay occurred before we were admitted, as the whole party, Superior and all, were at dinner; but after waiting some time, a monk appeared, who asked if we had brought letters from Jerusalem. On our replying that we had not been there, but had come direct from Cairo, he seemed a little disconcerted, and said we should have fifteen days' quarantine at Jerusalem; and that if they had known our route they could not have admitted us. As it was, we were promised something to eat, and were soon permitted to enjoy some soup, boiled meat, tripe, and sour Syrian wine, made, as we were told, by their own hands. Presently the Superior visited us, saying we had better wait at Bethlehem till we knew what period of quarantine would be assigned to us; and as

we found the convent comfortable, we thought it best to follow his advice.

Meantime two of our party started on horseback, hoping to make their way into the town by another gate than that at which the quarantine station was fixed. When they got there, however, they were repulsed by the soldiers, and referred to the doctor at the principal gate, who, luckily, was a Frenchman. He listened to reason, and promised that we should pass if we submitted to fumigation, and that in this case our baggage would remain a day or two, and undergo the same process. A slight hint about money was the open Sesamé, and the emissaries came back in high spirits, with the news, that tomorrow we might enter the Holy City.

I was not at all sorry to pass a night at Bethlehem. The associations which crowd upon the mind, whilst resting among the hills of this sacred spot, are too varied and serious to be described. We sought the terrace of the convent to mark the sun set over the hills around Jerusalem. Far below our feet, the monk who escorted us



pointed out a grove of olives as the spot where "there were shepherds abiding in the fields." On the left of this lay the vineyards of Engaddi; further off, but invisible to us, the convent of St. Saba. Beyond, the ridge of the Moab mountains, and under them, covered with a dark haze, the Dead Sea. It was, indeed, a glorious contrast, as the sun bathed the hills about Mount Sion in a flood of light, to look upon the gloomy outline of those dark waters that cover the doomed cities of the plain. It seemed as if heaven, with all its splendour, was opening here, and there were desolation and woe, whilst death eternal and misery without end were expecting their prey.

The centre of the church, with the high altar, is the property of the Greek fraternity. The left portion is Latin; the other Armenian. Below the structure are situated the various spots, hollowed out in the rock, which are considered holy. First, is the manger where they affirm that our Saviour was born. This is merely a hole in the solid stone, in which an altar is placed, and at the foot of

this a silver circle with a cross and inscription denotes the sacred locality; close to it is another recess, where Joseph was visited by the angel of the Lord. Here there were exhibited excavations, with sacred legends attached to them, generally adorned with old tapestry or faded silk, having an altar over each; under one of these the Innocents slaughtered by Herod are said to be buried. Another is St. Eusebius's tomb; one contains Santa Paola, another St. Jerome. Every sort of tradition and legend is mingled near the spot, of which, were it clearly proved to be what it professes, the associations would engross every thought and every prayer.

Though it is ludicrous to hear the stories which are recounted, it is impossible not to feel sad in these localities, where superstition works upon credulity, while the true faith is rejected and despised. One thing is, however, certain, namely, that upon this hallowed soil the great event took place that manifested God's mercy to fallen man. These hills must have echoed the triumphant songs of the heavenly host. To this lowly spot

came, to worship, the proud and wise kings of the East. Above our heads rose the star of the nativity, and here Jesus assumed the shape of fallen man to intercede for him before the throne of the Almighty, and to save those who believe in His truth, and rely on His mercy and grace.

We shared the monks' frugal meal, and retired early to our cells. It was the first time since our leaving Cairo that we had slept under a roof. We spread our beds and tried to sleep.

The next day, passing through a crowd of peasants, who beset us with mother-of-pearl and wooden ornaments, rosaries, and crosses, we made our way through the town, and reached what appeared, after winding down the hill of Bethlehem, to be a better road than that we had travelled. We saw here several villages on the right and left. The country appeared bleak and desolate in the extreme, until from the top of a hill, on which is the Convent of Mar Elias, we first beheld Jerusalem. My earliest feeling was disappointment, for from this point the holy city appeared situated

in a plain; at least there seemed very little rising ground, except the Mount of Olives, and we saw not the hills that "stand about" Jerusalem. However, on our advance, the situation, which is very remarkable, became more defined. As the traveller approaches from Bethlehem, little or nothing is to be seen but high walls, with domes and minarets here and there showing themselves above. On a nearer approach there is a deep and sudden descent into the valley of Jehoshaphat. Here some cultivation appears, and many venerable olive trees, which bear record to the flight of centuries. Ascending, we found ourselves at the gate, near which a tent was established, and close to it a small wooden hut, where we were detained until the doctor made his appearance. He was very civil; repeated that we must submit to fumigation, and made a regular charge for the operation, that consisted merely in our passing into the tent, and advancing to a large fire, in the midst of which a quantity of sulphur was thrown. While this was going on, Mr. Johns, the architect of the new church, who is acting as consul in Mr. Young's absence, very kindly

offered his services, and was so good as to accompany us to the Armenian convent, to which we had letters of recommendation.

We passed by a fortress, near the walls of the city, and presently, after threading a narrow street, and ascending Mount Zion, arrived at our destination. Here we soon found ourselves established in comfortable quarters. The monks, who are of a superior class to any we have seen, were attentive to all our wants. Every article of consumption can be obtained from the convent, and the fraternity either cook for the traveller or allow him a kitchen near his own apartment, which is, perhaps, preferable. We had not been long in our new abode before a band of monks, headed by two of their bishops, came to visit us. The dress of the brotherhood is very striking, though simple, and the cowl, which all wear, is of a peculiar shape, and differs from any I have observed.

We passed through the gate on Mount Zion towards the valley of Jehoshaphat, walking along the edge of the ravine, which on this side surrounds the city, having on our left the great mosque, that

now covers the site of the temple, and on our right, the burying-places of the Jews. Three or four tombs are conspicuous here, from their style of architecture and picturesque variety. These are said to be the sepulchres of Absalom, Jacob, and Zacharias. We were informed that in digging the foundations of the new church, they had passed through strata, if one may so call them, of four cities, built one over the other, and that there was great difficulty in getting down to the solid rock. Is it then so certain, that these tombs can be very ancient; or probable, that when the city was repeatedly destroyed, they alone escaped; independently of which, their form and sculpture appear to be more modern.

The Mount of Olives rose before us, on the top of which is a mosque. There are some old trees standing on the site of Gethsemane, but none, it would appear, date so far back as the Christian era. We ascended to the top of a building, where "justice is done" by the Turkish Governor, Tahir Pacha. This place, being one of general resort, is not considered sacred, like other

houses that surround the square, in which stands the great mosque. Into these a Frank may not penetrate, and, consequently, the only view he can obtain of the temple is from the roof of this edifice, called the Seraglio. Here we had a splendid prospect, over which the setting sun was shedding all its brightness.

The great mosque is circular, with a large dome occupying the middle of a paved court, containing a few trees. None but Mahometans are permitted to enter this boundary. I believe some persons have succeeded in getting into the mosque, but it has been an affair of some danger and difficulty. Our quarantine doctor came to pay us a visit, and took his fee very complacently for letting us pass. He gave us a wretched account of the state of things both here and all over the country. He says Beirout is occupied by 6000 Albanians, who are to be reinforced by many more; they are ungovernable and without discipline, eager to be turned loose upon the country, for which purpose they have been brought, and longing for the opportunity of committing excesses, which

no one has the power to check. This desperate band has been sent by the Sultan, with the view of keeping in check the mountaineers of the Lebanon, and to confirm his power in Syria, and this will not be done without fearful extremes, as the population are armed, and will not submit without a fight. The Albanians, when let loose upon a country, leave nothing behind them but death and destruction. Even the Turks have little control over them, an instance of which occurred lately, when an Albanian soldier insulted a Frenchman, who could get no redress. The consul appealed to Mustapha Pacha, but in vain; at last he struck his flag, ordered four ships of war, which were anchored at Beirout, to place themselves opposite the walls, and declared, that if the man was not given up, the city should be blown to atoms. The matches were lighted, and all was ready, when, at the eleventh hour, Mustapha Pacha gave in. But it was only with the greatest difficulty they could punish the Albanian, for the Turks were afraid of irritating his comrades; and nothing but the certainty of the consul's threat being

carried into effect, induced them to comply with his desire: since this has occurred, there has been less insult shown to Franks.

The interior of the convent church is gorgeously decorated, and contains innumerable daubs by way of pictures; but the walls being covered to a certain height with blue tiles, have an air of neatness and cleanliness. From the roof are hung innumerable lamps and strings of eggs—offerings of the pilgrims, who come from all parts of the East, and stay as long as the monks suppose they have any money left. When the last coin has been expended, they are allowed to depart. This establishment has fed and lodged 3000 pilgrims of both sexes, at one time, within the walls. We explored the whole of it, kitchen, bakery, dormitories, and separate cells. Here, as at Sinai, everything is done within the precincts. They have also a printing establishment, which was shown to us. From the roof there is a fine view, and round the edifice there are extensive gardens.

We visited the site of the new church, which, to judge by the plan, promises to

be unpretending and chaste. As for the idea of converting the Jews here, I fear it is utterly hopeless; a plan of this kind sounds very well in England; and those who know nothing of the East are led away, by their charitable wishes and feelings, to imagine that in this way much may be done. In Jerusalem, however, the Jews are more bigoted than elsewhere, and more attached to their own forms and faith. Is this to be wondered at, while they are every day reminded of them by the tombs of their forefathers, which lie around thick as fallen leaves? Certainly Jerusalem would appear to be the last place in which one would expect success for these efforts. Conversion would seem to be more practicable in Europe, for there the light of education may herald the brightness of the gospel to those who sit in darkness. But here it is, at best, an ungrateful task. The bishop has scarcely a congregation, besides his chaplains, his doctor, and their families. If they bring more clergymen, which is said to be contemplated, there will be a community living in Jerusalem at the expense of individuals

of benevolent purpose, as they would reside at a college, or any other institution of the same sort, in our own country, except that here they will be allowed to have their wives and families. They have little chance of proselytising. Every sect opposes their efforts, and the Jews themselves, though they would profit by any kindness shown to them in the way of medical attendance or charity, will, at present, not hear the Word, even though a bishop should come among them.

The Protestant congregation of Jerusalem consists of the Bishop and his family, Mr. Nicholayson, Mr. Ewald and his family, Mr. Williams, a convert named Simeon, his wife and two children, Dr. Macgowan, Mr. Bergheim, Dr. Macgowan's assistant, and another recent convert named Mishullam, who arrived with the Bishop and his family; amounting in all to eighteen persons. Passing travellers increase the attendance during their stay; but the progress of conversion, and the interests of Christianity, do not at present seem to require or warrant so large a church establishment as is here maintained;

neither does it appear that the desires of the benevolent and zealous contributors in Europe are advanced by the means adopted to secure their object, however well intended. I inquired, in vain, for any number of converts that could be properly authenticated.

We proceeded along the "via dolorosa," towards the entrance of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, passing by the great mosque to the gate of the city which leads directly into the valley of Jehoshaphat. The arch pointed out as the spot of the "Ecce Homo" is apparently Roman; there seems no reason to doubt that this tradition has grounds to rest upon. Along this path our Saviour bore his cross, and all the affecting incidents preceding the last awful scene of his life are said to have occurred at certain places which are shown in the street. The architecture seems to be of every date, and though nothing is unimpaired, there are stores of picturesque buildings, partly in ruins, which, independently of all other considerations, with the peculiar lights and shadows of this climate, afford endless interest to the spectator.

CHAPTER XX.

The Patriarch of the Armenian Church—Tomb of the Kings—Pool of Siloam—Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



CHAPTER XX.

JUNE 18th.—Mass was performed in the church of the convent, and we attended the ceremony. The Patriarch is seated on a throne, near which is another, never occupied, that is called the chair of St. James—the saint having been, as they choose to say, the first patriarch at the time of our Lord. After mass was over, the patriarch received us in his room, where I found two bishops and some other monks in conclave on the divan. The host was seated comfortably in the corner of the room with a desk before him, on which were his papers, spectacles, and snuff-box, in European fashion. The room was very low, but prettily orna-

mented; the divans of Armenian stuffs, and the floor covered with Persian carpets. Altogether it was very unlike a monastic cell; and when I was smoking my pipe and drinking café a la crème, out of a beautiful china cup, in common with the patriarch and brethren, who were all similarly provided, excepting the pipe, I could scarcely believe myself in a convent.

The fraternity are exceedingly kind and attentive. Everything we desire is supplied; so much so, that when our servants purchased some fruit, at our desire, a strong remonstrance was made. We could not get on very well in conversation, as there is no interpreter present, and the Italian of his Grace is very limited; but, still, something like communication was kept up. The utter ignorance of everything European which exists here, is very strange: as an instance, they asked me if we had houses as large as those in Cairo. They have scarcely as good an idea of England as the Chinese; but we are told that the Armenians are not unwilling to be placed under English protec-

tion, having that respect for our arms which the Chinese are learning by experience.

The Latin Church is entirely under the protection of France; and whenever any dispute arises between the monks and the inhabitants, the Turkish government takes the part of the convent. The Greeks also are entirely under Russian privilege and control; but the third sect, the Armenian, the most influential and powerful, because, perhaps, the most respectable, is without any protection at all, and forced to fight its own battles with the natives: consequently they would be too happy to be able to claim the protection of our flag, and to have our Consul as their defender. This would not be bad policy on the part of England, if it could be brought about, because a large and powerful body, extending into the heart of Asia, would become attached to us, and essentially promote the objects government may have in view for the future, either as to land communication with India through Syria, or as to co-operation in measures which would be agreeable to the Missionary Societies, who

have for their object the conversion of the Jews to Christianity. As it is, they have been the first to extend the hand of fellowship to the new bishop, and have expressed themselves kindly about the English convent, as they call the new church, which is about to be built.

Proceeding from the Zion Gate, I turned down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, passed through the burial-ground of the Jews, and ascended the Mount of Olives. Half way up, a magnificent view of the city includes the Mosque of Omar, the Holy Sepulchre, and several other objects of interest. But all these fail to occupy the mind of the Christian as he treads the earth so often pressed by the feet of our Saviour and his Disciples.

The hill is in part cultivated, but the ground is stony and poor. At the top is the church of the Ascension, now converted into a mosque, which, however, is half in ruins, and here they show a print of the foot of our Lord. We looked down upon Bethany, the distant and dreary waters of

the Dead Sea, and the purple mountains beyond Jordan. A murky vapour always seems to hover over the valley and around these shores.

June 19th.—To-day being Sunday, we attended the church service, which is celebrated in a small temporary room near the new building. The bishop and one of his chaplains, a German, were seated on either side of the altar; opposite, was the part appropriated to the ladies of his family. On the third side, the small congregation was assembled on benches, the consul's being the most remote. I am told that already some slight jealousy is springing up between the English and German part of this joint undertaking. If so, it is deeply to be deplored, as nothing would give the other sects greater pleasure than to find us following their example, and quarrelling amongst ourselves.

The tomb of Helena, or, as it is called, the Tomb of the Kings, is approached by the Damascus gate. We followed a stony path through a considerable grove of olive trees,

until, passing over the ruins of an extensive wall, we came upon a square excavation in the rock, about the size of the structure called Colonel Campbell's tomb, near the Pyramids. On one side of this deep pit are situated the sepulchres. The exterior facade (and in this they differ from most Egyptian tombs) has been richly sculptured, but in bad taste, so that it is very difficult here, as in all the ruined buildings and architecture of Jerusalem, to discover what age or what school produced them.

There is a fine old mulberry tree near the low arch by which the excavation is entered; passing this, and crossing over, the traveller arrives at the door of the sepulchres, and descending some steps, finds himself in a series of chambers, one branching off from another, in each of which are places for the reception of the dead, being ledges of stone cut in the rock. At the entrance of the second chamber is a heavy stone door, which is prostrate, the groove in which it moved being traceable above the doorway. There is nothing else here except the richly carved

lid of a sarcophagus, which lies in one of the chambers; and though it is impossible not to remark the similarity these burying places bear to those in Egypt, it must be confessed that the latter are usually more imposing; and though the general plan appears very often to be the same, the works executed by the early Egyptians are far superior.

We were shown the place to which the Jews repair to mourn over their departed glories, and the fate of their glorious temple. To the west of the mosque of Omar, a range of huge stones forms the base of, and supports the more modern walls, which bears good evidence, by its appearance, of dating from the earliest ages, and of having escaped the general destruction which so often visited the city. This portion has remained amid the convulsions of centuries almost unimpaired, except in its outward appearance. There is a peculiar cutting, or framework, round the edge, which is remarkable for its execution and finish.

Similar marks are found upon masonry

near Hebron, which are supposed to belong to the same period. To this spot, on Friday, the Jews repair, and sitting on the ruins, read the proud yet sorrowful history of their race, and pray for its restitution to its ancient splendour. One corner is considered peculiarly sacred, as being nearest to the spot occupied by the Holy of Holies. Here, they succeed each other in prayer. Women and men kiss the ruined walls of the temple, and worship the God whose Son they rejected, and whose warnings and prophecies they despised.

How fearfully does this general destruction fulfil all that has been foretold. Jerusalem, at least all that was sacred and hallowed about her, is indeed a heap of stones. Nothing can be safely pronounced to be identical with her palmy days, except these or similar ruins, and the absolute uncertainty which hangs over her desolation, shows that the inscrutable ways of God are accomplished, not only in the spirit, but in the letter of his word.

From this spot, we made a circuit, again

approaching the wall at a point nearer the wall of the town, where remains are to be seen of the bridge which connected the temple area with Mount Zion. The stones forming the base are two huge blocks, treble the size of those forming the other parts of the wall, that extends on each side of the point from which the arch springs, yet these are bevelled into each other in such a way as to leave no doubt of their contemporaneous construction. Dr. Robinson treats this as a great discovery, but Catherwood and Bonomi had, I believe, remarked it long before, and no one with any observation could see this part of the wall without at once confessing that the bridge was there.

We rested ourselves in the convent garden, lying under a huge fig-tree, watching the last rays of the sun, surrounding as with a glory the top of the Mount of Olives, but in vain endeavouring to pierce the dark vapours rising from the sites of Sodom and Gomorrah. The garden was, as usual, half wild, but the orange and pomegranate, some very sweet geranium and some carnations,

made amends for the dilapidations of the walls and the rotten state of the paling. Indeed, the very want of order makes these places more picturesque than the trim parterres of our own country. Here there is a freedom of nature, unchecked in its exuberance of blossom and foliage. No pruning-knife is allowed to control her luxuriance, and she makes amends for man's carelessness and indolent neglect.

June 20th.—At sunrise, we started by the Zion gate, and winding down the hill towards the junction of Jehoshaphat and the valley of Hinnom, drank our fill at the pool of Siloam. This is a deep hole in the rock. The water is supplied three times a day from a reservoir, and our attendant monk explained to us that it was like the "sea at Suez," when the tide ebbed and flowed. When we were there, a group of Bedouins were filling their water-skins, and some women, sitting near, stared suspiciously at the strangers from under their veils, which are here worn closer than elsewhere, completely hiding the eyes as well as the other

features. Many, however, of the peasants we met on our way to Jerusalem were totally unveiled, whose features were certainly very handsome.

From Siloam we passed by the tombs of Jehoshaphat, and entered the garden of Gethsemane; and here our Armenian guide pointed out the spot where Jesus slept, before He was betrayed. A small pillar, standing in a wall of loose stones which encompasses the place, denotes the spot. Farther on, a small portion of ground is enclosed, containing four dwarf olive-trees, and these were mentioned as part of the convent property!

We crossed the path leading to the Mount of Olives, and descended by some steps to the sepulchre, or fountain, of the Virgin Mary, which is apportioned as usual between the rival sects. It is a vault, which can be approached only by a steep descent of steps. Half way down, we were shown on one side the tomb of the Virgin's mother, and on the opposite that of Joseph. At the bottom we found ourselves before an

altar, where the monks of our own convent were celebrating mass. Here a large cistern, under the chapel, solved the enigma of the pool of Siloam, for the hole in the rock is supplied from this basin when water is abundant; but in times of scarcity the monks can always stop the supply, and keep enough for themselves. Hence their desire to conceal the real source of the water of the pool of Siloam. The channels whereby the water is conveyed I could not ascertain, but probably they are underground, by the course of the brook Kedron.

Since the preceding sentences were written, I have referred to Robinson, who, it appears, measured the underground communication between the pool of Siloam and a fountain called also by the Virgin's name, which is to be found between Siloam and the tomb or chapel before-mentioned. He seems to think both these are supplied by a large well under the mosque of Omar, which was also the great reservoir for giving water to the city when the temple occupied that site. There are supposed to be large con-

duits under the city and through the rock, the existence and management of which were known even in former times to very few. What is the present state of these there seems to be no means of telling, but if the well of the temple supplies the one lowest down the valley by underground communication, and a passage has been traced to the next in succession, there seems to be no reason for doubting that all are filled by the same means. The only difference between my previous supposition and the Doctor's appears to be, that these reservoirs are supplied from within the city, and that the Turks of the mosque, and not the monks of the Chapel of the Virgin, have the command and control of the water.

We saw the place where the Virgin is said to have been buried, and from hence ascending to the city, we entered by St. Stephen's Gate, and proceeded to the church of the Holy Sepulchre. The entrance is highly picturesque, but the interior at first disappointed us. The sepulchre stands under a dome, the arches of which are dilapidated,

and the ornaments fading and decayed. The sepulchre is marble, resembling a vast sarcophagus of a pale red colour. It rises from the floor nearly forty feet. Immediately opposite is the entrance to the Greek church, with its high altar covered with gilding and most gorgeous ornaments; on either side extend the aisles. The sepulchre stands alone under the dome, which would appear like a vestibule to the other churches attached to it.

The Latin church is in another division of the building, as is the Armenian. But here it would appear the Greeks are masters, and the richness of their embellishments places everything else in the shade. There is little difference in the so-called Holy Sepulchre, as to its interior, from others we have seen. It contains an altar of marble, supposed to cover the stone of the tomb, a bad picture; and a profusion of ornaments.

I walked round the church, and visited the spots reputed sacred by the monks, such as the place where the holy cross was found,

and the portion of the ground upon which the Saviour's garments were parted asunder; and finally ascended a flight of stairs to Mount Calvary, which occupies a gallery of the church. A richly-ornamented chapel, covered with gilded ornaments and lamps, contains a large crucifix, with figures of the Virgin and Mary Magdalen on each side. Our guide was much more anxious to set forth the riches of his own convent, and depreciate the Greeks, than to call our minds to the sanctity of the spot; and pointed out the burning lamps before the various altars, the shreds and patches of old silk or tapestried hangings in each, saying, "This is Greek—this is ours—that is Latin," till I was heartily tired of the whole scene.

We had previously visited a small Armenian chapel, built upon the spot formerly known as Golgotha; but the monks content themselves by saying that Jesus was bound near the place. Here are the tombs of the patriarchs and bishops, and as our monk said, "Great men, not come me." There

was a quiet humility in this, which was pleasing. Near it is the Anglo-Armenian burying-ground, and also the sepulchres of the Armenian monks, to which, as our friend would have said, "come me."

CHAPTER XXI.

Valley of Hinnom — Mount Zion — Sacred Places —
Tomb of Lazarus — Bethany.



CHAPTER XXI.

JUNE 21st.—One of our friends here has been so kind as to make a journey to Hebron in order to arrange matters for us, if possible, with Abderachman, the Sheikh-el-Bellad of that place, for our expedition to Petra. It was exceedingly amiable of him to take this trouble, for it is not every man who, with a great deal of business of his own, will mount his horse and ride a day's journey to do a stranger a service.

I descended into the valley of Hinnom, near the upper part of Siloam, where we found extensive cultivation, and gardens containing olives, acacias, pomegranates, and

figs. Further on, we reached the point where this valley joins Jehoshaphat, which is, beyond all comparison, the most beautiful spot in the environs of Jerusalem. From the bottom of the hills, that meet here, the Mount of Offence, and the Hill of Evil Counsel, and standing above masses of fruit trees, in full luxuriance, and covered with verdure of every hue, the traveller looks up the valley of Jehoshaphat, with Mount Moriah, on which is the great mosque, on one side, and the Mount of Olives on the other. In front, on the right, upon the lowest rocks of the Mount of Olives, or rather verging on the Mount of Offence, is situated the village of Siloam. The crags upon which it stands are perforated with tombs, some of which serve as stores, others as dwellings for the inhabitants. These, with some square buildings like towers, form the village which hangs over the watercourse of the brook Kedron. In the distance, and midway between the hills which form Jehoshaphat, there is a view of the tomb of Absalom, rising like a small peak. High

above all, on the left, is seen the great mosque, with another called El-Aksa behind it. The foreground of the view is filled up with cattle, groups of peasants, Bedouins watering at the wells, and numerous threshing-floors where the harvest was being disposed of.

The gardens here are said to occupy the site of those of Solomon, and the Mount of Offence to be the locality where the Jews sacrificed to Baal. The scene we were gazing upon is that part of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom denounced as Tophet by the prophet Jeremiah. "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore shall the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter, for they shall bury in Tophet till there is no place. And the carcasses of these people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven and for the

beasts of the earth, and none shall pay them away."

No one can stand upon this spot without being struck with the accurate fulfilment of the prophecy. They have buried in Tophet till there is no place, and the carcasses of the people have been food for the fowls of the heaven and the beasts of the field. The tombs, which are innumerable, both in the sides of Hinnom and the Hill of Offence, are truly yawning sepulchres, for they have given up their dead. The bones have been scattered in dust; the vulture and the jackal have feasted upon all that was left of man. But the hollow caverns on the hill side remain for a testimony of the fulfilment of prophecy.

In the valley of Jehoshaphat we are told that God will descend to judgment. "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and parted my land." "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jeho-

shaphat, for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about."

It is the tradition among the Mahometans that their prophet is to judge the world on this spot, sitting upon a rock in the space now occupied by the Mosque of Omar. Nothing can surpass the beauty of this prospect; yet, as it is gazed upon, a sense of desolation oppresses the mind, recalling, at every moment, the contrast of what Zion was in her palmy days, with her present state. The hills above and around her were probably covered by the blooming fig tree, and rich with the spreading tendrils of the vine. The rocks, now barren and blasted, were then perhaps shaded by thick groves, or adorned with terraces and gardens. Peace was within her walls, and plenteousness in her palaces. Now they are alike profaned by the insolent Mahometan and the rapacious Bedouin, and desecrated by false creeds, whether Greek, Latin, or Armenian. Her walls, within and without, are covered with shame; not even one solitary cross as yet glitters among her pinnacles. The

crescent alone, in haughty derision, raises its horns to the sky, over that land where our Saviour lived, taught, and died; where Judah flourished, sinned, and was cast down. Here at this hour, rival ministers of various sects, promulgate their doctrines even upon the holiest ground, with frantic violence and infuriate jealousy, in the land favoured by the actual presence of the Almighty, and pointed out as the scene of the great consummation of all things, when He shall gather all nations and bring them down into the valley of decision.

As the traveller returns up the hill to the Zion gate, the walking is severe and unpleasant. Jerusalem is indeed a heap of stones, for even the paths around are strewn with fragments of rock, and piles of ruins are to be seen in many places, without and within the walls. The ascent on all sides of Mount Zion is steep and difficult. Solomon, with his forty thousand horses and ten thousand chariots, could only have made use of them by issuing from the northern side of the city, or, rather, that part of the country

nearest and round about the Damascus gate. Mount Zion must have been a fortress of immense strength, previously to the existence of those improvements in warfare which have made such changes in the last few years.

It was formerly separated from Mount Moriah by a valley, or hollow, over which the bridge was thrown, the remains of which I have elsewhere alluded to. Now, however, the space between is almost entirely filled up, so that Gihon, Hinnom, and Jehoshaphat form a deep natural ditch around the mound formed by Zion and Moriah, on which arise the high and, in some parts, well-built walls of solid masonry, based upon huge stones, which surround Jerusalem. The weak points of attack seem to be those near the Damascus gate, that would be easily commanded by the heights near which Titus's army encamped, in undoubtedly the best position for a besieging army.

Who can foretel the next assault that Zion is fated to sustain. Her trials are not over yet, nor is her warfare accomplished. The work of the crusaders has been long since

undone; the infidel still reigns upon the holy Mount; let us hope that his day may be short in the land, and that God in His infinite mercy will bring back His lost people to Judah, to form one flock under one shepherd, with those righteous men in other lands, who love and fear Him, who believe in His word, and trust to His mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ.

To-day I have been reading a curious book, called the "Kings of the East." The object is to prove that the East India Company is the instrument selected by God as the means of restoring the Jews to Palestine. The author makes out his case ingeniously, by collating prophecies with accomplished facts. He considers the Turkish empire as virtually *dried up*, and about to be extinguished, which he conceives to be predicted under the name of the mystical Euphrates.

As we ascended the Mount of Olives, a procession of women appeared, wending its way towards the little village behind the mosque. This proved to be a wedding. The ladies were all unveiled, and their

dresses were by far the prettiest I have seen, and contained a mixture of the gayest and most brilliant colours. They wore curiously embroidered handkerchiefs thrown back from the head, and, as usual, a profusion of coins and ornaments in the hair. We followed them into an assemblage of huts, where we found about fifty men and boys, and as many more women and girls.

There was a great uproar with drums and pipes, but we looked unmolested at the wild groups and the various costumes that were collected there. The Bedouins were leaning on their guns, ready for the customary *feu-de-joie*; the elder ones were talking as usual about money—the women about dresses, and the bride's fortune. The tops of the huts were crowded with spectators, several of whom were veiled; but the generality were not anxious for concealment, and we saw much beauty among the dark eyes that looked down upon us.

In a few minutes, the noise increased; the peculiar yell of the women was heard, and a shot or two were fired. From

one of the huts where the ceremony had probably taken place, the procession sallied forth. First, there was a huge wooden figure, dressed up as the bride, probably in her own trappings; it had a head-dress, and all the usual female appendages. The people passed this over their heads, and it was bandied about, from one to another, for some time, until at last it was borne away into a neighbouring field, into which the whole crowd followed, screeching and yelling round it. At a large olive-tree they halted, fired off their guns, and redoubled their noise and music. ●

The localities of Jerusalem under the new *regime* are by no means safe. The people here, as in Syria, are all armed, thanks to our policy, and now that they find the Sultan as hard, if not a worse master than Ibrahim Pacha, they feel quite ready to use them at any moment, and should there be any outbreak, they will not be so easily subdued as in their former defenceless state. The Sultan, who for the first year pretended to exact less than Mehemet Ali, has now called

upon the people to pay in the same ratio that they did under the Pacha, and, moreover, to pay up the arrears, which he had not claimed on the first arrangement. Thus, they have now to pay two years of the same tax they had before, and find themselves only transferred from one despotism to another, with the additional disadvantage that, while under the Pacha, there was something like order and government; now every one must protect himself and take his chance.

Two old men conducted us afterwards into the mosque, where the Church of the Ascension formerly stood. Here they showed us the print of our Saviour's foot, which is nothing more than a mark or hollow in the rock. There is a stone-work frame round it, and it is one of the discreditable mummeries of the monks.

June 23rd.—To-day, the weather has become cool and fresh; the wind is very high, and as we are inhabiting the most elevated spot in Jerusalem, we feel its effects in the refreshing and invigorating air.

We rode out to Bethany, crossing Jeho-

shaphat, and leaving Siloam on the right, and the Mount of Olives on the left. Climbing up the valley, by a gentle ascent, we passed through innumerable tombs of the Jews, and pursued our way through the hills. These graves are merely large fragments of stone, placed upon the surface, without reference to order or arrangement, but so near each other as to form almost a pavement. Winding round the base of the Mount of Olives, we crossed a lovely valley, and once more ascending through picturesque crags, arrived at some excavated tombs of evident antiquity. A little further on, the secluded glen of Bethany opened upon us; a ruined tower, rising against the blue sky, marked the site. We found some Arabs near, who seemed sulky and ill-disposed, for, as we had the Janizary of the Consul with us, they probably thought they would not receive a present. We saw the so-called tomb of Lazarus, which has nothing to distinguish it from any other, except the mosque near it, of which we beheld, with no very cordial feeling, the cupola and crescent.

On the other side of the glen, there is a beautiful view of the village, so much changed since its earlier and more peaceful days. There are few traces of what it was, nor anything to see but a mass of Arab huts, heaped one over the other as convenience suited, or where there was the least amount of trouble—wretched piles of misery and filth. And yet, from a distance, these formal squares form themselves into picturesque objects. Under some splendid olive trees, we sat musing over the past history of this favourite spot of our Saviour and His Disciples. Before us was the outline, which cannot be much altered since that sacred epoch. The crags and rocks must still be nearly the same. The Dead Sea is not visible, but the vapour which floats above it marked its locality.

The young Arabs of the village were amusing themselves by flinging stones at the Hadjis, or pilgrims, as they called us; upon which the Janizary, burning with rage, started full tilt down the hill with his baton of office in his hand. To our great

amusement, as he was running after these urchins, he disappeared behind a wall, and a great cloud of dust marked his decline and fall. His foot having slipped, the representative of the might of England tumbled head over heels among the dust and stones of a dilapidated hut. Nothing daunted, however, he got up and renewed the chase with fresh vigour, but the young Bedouins were too many for him, and at last we saw the band divide, taking different directions in their flight among the huts and pig-sties. It was a curious exemplification of the Ishmaelite. We had already seen what their seniors were, and here the younger ones seemed determined to prove to us, that from their earliest days, their hands were against every man.

CHAPTER XXII.

Plains of Mamre—Sheikh of the Jellaheen—Kurmul—
Ruins of Kurnub—Wady Araba—Mount Hor—
Aaron's Tomb.



CHAPTER XXII.

JUNE 25th. — Our party is small in comparison with what it was; a few camels carry the baggage, and the servants, as well as ourselves, are mounted on horses. These animals took us in safety over the very worst parts of the road, and so sure-footed are they from practice, that we felt no uneasiness. The journey, as far as Hebron, presented no novelty. We skirted Bethlehem on the left, as it is off the road, and passing close by the tomb of Rachel, soon caught our van-guard, and proceeded in company as far as Edroua, where we halted previously on our way to Jerusalem. Here we enjoyed a frugal repast, and rested

near the fountains, not knowing how late we might arrive at Hebron.

When we again moved on, the sun was setting, and we had three hours before us of bad road, but there was still enough light for us to gaze upon the fertile plains of Mamre, one of the loveliest regions, as approached from Jerusalem, that can be imagined. We pitched our tent upon the ground near the tombs where we had previously encamped. The town lay in shadow beneath us, the moon was rising behind the wooded hills, and the lights were glancing and glimmering in the valley. At last, we are on our road to Petra, once more to pass over the dreary desert, and to trust to the faithless Bedouins.

June 26th.—This morning Abderachman made his appearance. He is not a Bedouin, but the Sheikh-el-Bellad, or head of the village, of Hebron. Two other Sheikhs, who are to have the care of our persons, accompanied him; one called Olin Ebn Rabchan, the other Taif Allah. The latter is the Sheikh of the Jellabeen, who accompanied Lord Prudhoe

to Petra. They all gave the most solemn and positive assurances that there should be no trouble or difficulty in our journey, stay, and return, for we discussed all these points with them, and, as far as we can see, there appears to be no difficulty.

The Sheikh of the Jellaheen appears a good man, and his countenance is prepossessing; very different is Abderachman, who looks like a rogue. His son came with him into the tent, very lame from the kick of a horse. The poor boy was much hurt, his foot black and swollen, and yet for eight days nothing had been done to it, except to rub it with butter. We recommended leeches, but they said there were none in the country; which was an excuse to save the trouble and expense, or perhaps they did not like the remedy. It is curious to observe the perfect apathy with which these people look upon human life. It is a toss up whether the child loses his foot or not, and yet they hesitate to apply the cure. After sitting for an hour, the dignitaries departed to the town, probably to talk over the contract, of which

Abderachman of course will get the lion's share. ✓

Early in the morning, the Jellaheens arrived with their camels, almost all good-looking ones, more like those of the Alouins than of our old acquaintances, the Tawara. But the animals were so wild and unused to burthens, that it took three hours or more to load our small caravan. In the midst of the confusion, we discovered that they had brought no ropes with them, and many of the camels had not even halters, having been merely driven in from the fields. After the usual scramble, quarrel, and violence, in which our new allies were as great adepts as the rest of the breed, we got upon our dromedaries, the Shiekh-el-Bellad on his horse preceding us, with Taif Allah, the Jellaheen Sheikh, also riding, and very well mounted, on a clever bay mare.

Passing the gate of Hebron, we created a great sensation among the idlers, as we filed in most irregular procession. The camels, when loaded, took their own course; one bolted across the track, the next ran up the

hill, and the third nearly killed a poor woman and her child; the Arabs shouting all the time, and perfectly careless as to what might happen to our baggage, or to those who might be in the way.

On leaving the town, we proceeded through rocky valleys covered with terraces, as on the other side of Hebron, and sprinkled with gardens and occasional corn-fields. At the beginning of these, Abderachman took his leave, leaving his brother with us, and quietly recommended that we should pay nothing, except to himself, until our return. He again promised, by his head, that we should have no annoyance or difficulty, and finally when he saw us depart, got off his horse and saluted us.

We rode, for three hours, to a ruined tower, on the site of the ruined city of Kurmul, or Carmel. The track, after passing the valleys in the immediate vicinity of Hebron, and crossing some plains partially cultivated by the Fellaheen, emerged from a hollow, and skirted the top of a hill, from whence we overlooked the country around the Dead Sea. Upon an eminence before us was the

tower of Kurmul, the only pile, among heaps of ruins and stones—near this we encamped.

June 27th.—We had a restless night, as was the one at Hebron. The convent has, alas! supplied us with live stock, which we convey into the desert, usually free from such visitants. At midnight, to our horror, the Arabs began among themselves to talk about money; and as this ceremony always breeds a quarrel, they continued their disputes for several hours. At last we set out. In due time, we were encamped at Milch, about seven hours from Carmel, where there are wells resembling those of Birsheba. We had just sat down, when Taif Allah, who evidently does not mean to take things quietly, marched into the tent to ask for some water for his eyes. He then coolly took off his sword and pistols, and laid himself at full length, partly on our carpets, and half on the sand, and in a few minutes was snoring profoundly. We offered him food, but he declined. Soon after, the other Sheikh entered, not with the excuse of water,

but in order to profit by the shade. Here we are at the disposal of two Sheikhs, who are snoring at our feet, without any means of saying to them that we desire to be "private." Taif Allah thinks himself lord of a thousand subjects, a petty prince, and better than all the Franks in the world, and if honour is done to any one, it is to us by his lying in our tents.

We moved forward, after a rest rendered painful by the heat and burning wind. The Sheikh rose after some time, with his companion, and shook himself; then mounted a dromedary, and rode on before, conspicuous with his flowing robes and tufted spear. Leaving the wells, we passed the ruins of Milch, where a falling arch and the fragments of a tower are all that remain. A dreary ride of three hours brought us to a sheltered spot, where we encamped for the night, called Wady Ararah.

In our way hither, the first dismal traces of Ibrahim Pacha's celebrated retreat, two years since, presented themselves. We passed over human bones, remains of horses

and camels, tatters of clothing, and at last some skeletons, which became more frequent as we proceeded, till the track became almost covered with these horrid memorials. The wretched army marched through these desert wastes, without a drop of water, and almost without provisions; numbers sank by the way and died, others, half drooping, were shot and plundered by the Bedouins, who hovered like birds of prey round the rear of the Egyptians. It is said that there never was a parallel in point of loss of life, to this retreat of Ibrahim, except Napoleon's, from Moscow.

June 28th.—Our tents are packed and camels laden with twice the rapidity we have been used to: strange to say, also, we had a perfectly quiet night—not a sound was to be heard. We overtook a large caravan of Arabs loaded with corn, who carried with them their children and some women. They were journeying to the hills of Idumæa, and belong to the tribe of which Aboudjazi is chief. Though they are kith and kin of Hussein, of the Alouins, they seemed very civil,





PASS OF ES SUFEH.

London Henry Colburn, 1849.

and our Sheikh was extremely communicative with them. The distant ruins of Kurnub appeared a little on the right of our line of march. This place is like Rehaibe or Elusa—a heap of stones; and although once it must have been a considerable town, only a few square piles of stones are now standing. After looking at the remains, we rode on to the foot of the pass of Es Sufah, and halted under some parched acacias, where bleaching bones were lying all around us. I picked up a stock of a musket near a heap of tattered rags, while a skull was grinning at the new possessor of the broken remnant. The camels and horses at Akaba were bad enough, but there is here more fearful evidence of the horrors of war than we have seen.

Our journey lay up the pass of Es Sufah, where the track became gradually more precipitous, and we wound along the sides of deep ravines, and skirted tremendous precipices that made us tremble for a false step or a rolling stone. When we reached the top, the prospect we gazed upon was indeed sub-

lime. Before us, far as the eye could reach, was the great Wady Araba. The high chain of mountains bounding it on the east—the Land of Edom—was rosy with the setting sun. Mount Hor, in the distance, conspicuous from its dark colour and double peak, marked out for us the termination of our journey. On the left, slept the Dead Sea; on the right the distant summits about Akaba were frowning before us. As we descended, the pass became more and more steep and difficult. The camels, however, bore their loads safely. As for ourselves, we preferred walking, for in some places the rock was shelving and smooth, and a slip would have been irrecoverable.

By the time we reached the foot of the pass, it was late, and we had still a long way before us—there being no herbage for the camels—so we continued our course along low ridges of rocks and small Wadys, which divide the mountains we had descended, from the main valley of Wady Araba.

It was quite dark when we arrived at the

appointed spot, on the edge of the great Wady. The wind had sprung up, oppressively hot and charged with sand, so that we had great difficulty in pitching the tent; but the Arabs worked so willingly, and are so much more handy and active than our former companions, that our work proceeded much more smoothly. Indeed, since we started, there is every reason to be pleased with the Sheikh and his people. They are good humoured, attentive, and zealous, and never make a difficulty. We have been asked for nothing. They have their own food, such as it is, and a little coffee for Taif Allah and the other Sheikh, and some tobacco for the rest, satisfies them. Far different are the Sinai Arabs, who, from the time we started, until the morning they left us, never ceased begging, and were never satisfied. Ibrahim, the brother of Abderrachman, is an acquisition to our party; he is more gentle than the Bedouins, and perfectly unassuming.

Our course towards Mount Hor was a slanting one, for we did not as yet launch

into Wady Araba, but passing across several tributary glens, through utter and dreary desolation, we reached some palm trees, and the refreshing green of the springs of Ain Weibe broke upon us. We were most anxious for water, for our skins were empty, and there had been none where we halted for the night. When we arrived at the springs, the ground was covered with a substance that promised badly for the water, which, when we tasted and smelt, proved undrinkable. After a long search, another spring was found below the first, where the source, after filtering through some rocks, became clear and good. Never did we really know the luxury of water before. Used as Europeans are to have as much at any time as they desire, it requires the experience of thirst in the desert to appreciate its value. We literally revelled in the source; Arabs, camels, all were satiating themselves; and after drinking as much as they could, some of the party finished their enjoyment by bathing in the wet mud which surrounded it.

This is, according to some, the site of Kadesh Barnea. It was here that Miriam died. From hence messengers were sent by the Israelites to ask leave to pass through Edom, and here also, when the springs had been dried up, Moses summoned the waters from the bosom of the rock. Even without these recollections, which, of course, can, after all, be founded only on supposition, there being not even a tradition among the Bedouins to rest upon, the spot is a beautiful one—a perfect oasis in a desert waste of sand. And here we rested awhile under the friendly shadow of the palms; but the Sheikh soon hurried us away, saying that perhaps strange Arabs might come to find water, as we had done, and that it was better to start: so pursuing our course towards Mount Hor, we entered a large Wady, called El Jeib, in the midst of which, at a distance, a single camel was seen feeding upon the brushwood.

At first, Taif Allah imagined that a party of unfriendly Arabs were near, but after a careful survey he sent a horseman forward

to endeavour to catch the camel. No sooner was he off than away went the quarry. There was a beautiful chase, for the dromedary, with a long start, took towards the hills at full speed, the horse following like a greyhound. The latter bounded over stones, and rocks, and stumps of trees, at a pace that was marvellous, the Arab, poisoning the Sheikh's spear, and guiding his steed only by a rope round the neck. At last it was clear that he had the best of it, and the dromedary was turned back into the plain. Now all the party started on foot to surround him, and after several ineffectual attempts to escape, he bolted into the string of those who carried our baggage. The instant he was caught an Arab jumped on his back, without rope or stick, guiding him as he chose; and the animal, so wild before, became at once submissive and tame. Our Bedouins knew him by his marks to belong to our old friends the Tiyayah tribe, with whom they happen to be on good terms, and therefore promised to restore him to the owners. He had been probably stolen by

some of the tribes east of the Dead Sea from the camp of the Tiyayah, and breaking away from them at night, had attempted to return home. Altogether, it was as pretty a run as could be seen, and for some minutes all our party were as much excited as maniacs.

We encamped at the base of some low hills, where there was some bad water, but we were well supplied, having filled our skins at Ain-Weibe.

June 30th.—We were off before sunrise, and began to ascend the pass from Wady Jeib into the recesses of Mount Hor. This is a long and tedious process, but the ascent from first to last is an unvarying scene of beauty and grandeur; at first winding along narrow water-courses, then climbing the sides of precipitous ravines, with crags and rocks of every hue and form, rising on every side. The colouring surpasses all description; the pink sand-rocks show themselves here for the first time, and the unusual hues at first strike the spectator as displeasing; but as they blend together with the variously-

tinted strata of the splintered crags, the effect is matchless.

At last, we arrived at the top of the pass, and Mount Hor rose before us. It is not very high from this point, but already we stand on an immense altitude. It is a large cone with two peaks, on the lowest of which stands the mosque, covering the tomb of Aaron. From this a gentle descent leads into Wady Mousa, and here we have reached the edge of the valley which contains Petra, and are reposing at our ease, having performed the journey in perfect safety, with apparently no difficulties to encounter or expect. As yet none of the Fellaheen have shown themselves, and I do not believe there is any danger of their interfering with us; neither will the Alouins, with Sheikh Hussein, molest us, for they are forced to buy their corn at Hebron, and must pass through Taif Allah's country, through which, also, travellers from Akaba are conducted by Hussein, so that he will not venture to quarrel with the Jellaheen.

We set off to climb Mount Hor, to which,

from the valley where we halted, the ascent is short and easy. Taif Allah led the way, with the other Sheikh and Ibrahim; two Arabs, also, carried water, with an old negro, who calls himself the servant of the Sheikh. All his limbs are crooked, and his face as flat as a plate—a living personification of Caliban, if any one could fancy the monster dyed black. The old creature is attentive to every one, and never refuses any job, let it be ever so hard; he is the man of all work, of the whole party, and yet is always willing and gay.

We skirted the precipitous rocks of the peak, winding round the base among broken fragments of stone, the remains of walls and ancient terraces. At every step, among the shrubs that spring from the crevices of the rocks, the traveller is greeted with the sweetest odours from the plants crushed by his feet. The juniper and the cypress shoot up on all sides; wild flowers of various sorts, with the most vivid colours, are scattered about, and he finds some difficulty in satisfying himself, with this fairy

scenery around him, that the desert and the desolate wilderness are his abiding place.

The mountains of Edom rose proudly before us, a high ridge looking down even upon Mount Hor. Everywhere there were traces of former cultivation, even to the very tops of the hills; but large patches of green, and groups of scattered trees upon the mountains, marked out the more modern villages, and the tribes of Bedouins who dwell there. Between these and Mount Hor extends a barrier of dark rocks, torn into the most fantastic shapes, and inaccessible even to the mountain goat. Round the base of the cone, on which the mosque is built, are to be seen innumerable vestiges of a former race. Staircases are cut deeply in the cliffs, and where there is no rock, hewn stones are placed one above another, showing evidently the work of skilful hands, but these are now so broken and shattered as to be, in some parts, scarcely passable.

Taking our way through a small table-land, we descried the mosque upon a craggy peak before us, and climbed up towards it

through a chasm in the cliff, passing over the *debris* of an old tank or reservoir. The whole waste of desolation we had passed over now lay spread out at our feet. Wady Araba, with all its tributary valleys, girdled with mighty mountains, appeared like a broad stream of gold, and far away, in every direction, lay the unbroken expanse of desert, dreary and awful to behold. And yet the scene was beaming with the most varied and singular colouring. To any one who has not seen the effect of the sun upon the various strata of the desert, it is very difficult to convey an idea of its almost magical powers of producing the brightest hues. The sand glitters, the rocks sparkle; jewels and gold, and precious stones of all colours, seem scattered on the mountains. A cloud covers the sunbeam, and the whole effect vanishes, to re-appear more brilliant than ever. And it is this constant change of tints that makes the desert beautiful, and varies objects that would be otherwise monotonous and tiresome.

Here, if tradition is to be believed, is the

Mount Hor, so often alluded to in Scripture. The last affecting scene of Aaron's life took place upon this spot. By the command of the Almighty, he went up to die, and yet not before he saw that land of promise he was forbidden to enter. Upon these sublime pinnacles Moses was called upon to witness the closing hours of his brother and friend, to mark the eyes fading away that had smiled upon him in companionship for so many years of sorrow and privation, and to see those eloquent lips closing in death, which, in life, had been gifted by the Almighty with such surpassing power; of all the trials of the brothers, this last was perhaps the hardest to bear. I know scarcely any event in Scripture, the simple record of which conveys so melancholy a feeling to the mind, as this solemn close of a long and laborious ministry. I refer more particularly to his transferring his robes of office to his son, when going up expressly for the purpose of death, with the additional pang of seeing afar off the land flowing with milk and honey—

the object of so many longing and anxious thoughts—for the first, yet the last time.

The mosque built over the tomb of the prophet is a small square with a dome, paved with different sorts of marble and porphyry. All of this, however, is broken and half destroyed. Under this place is the sepulchre, covered with a green pall, and around it are suspended the various offerings of pilgrims—beads, ostrich eggs, and sundry old rags and tatters. A few steps lead to a subterranean chamber, supposed to be the real tomb, where there is nothing remarkable but a pair of iron gates, wide open and covered with rust.

Here, we had a distant view of El Deir, the large temple at Petra, so long unvisited by travellers, who never could find or reach it from the valleys beneath. The descent was wild and picturesque, through rough precipices and chasms, loaded with wild shrubs. A deep valley divides Mount Hór from the ridge of Wady Mousa, which is called Wady Haroun, or Aaron's valley,

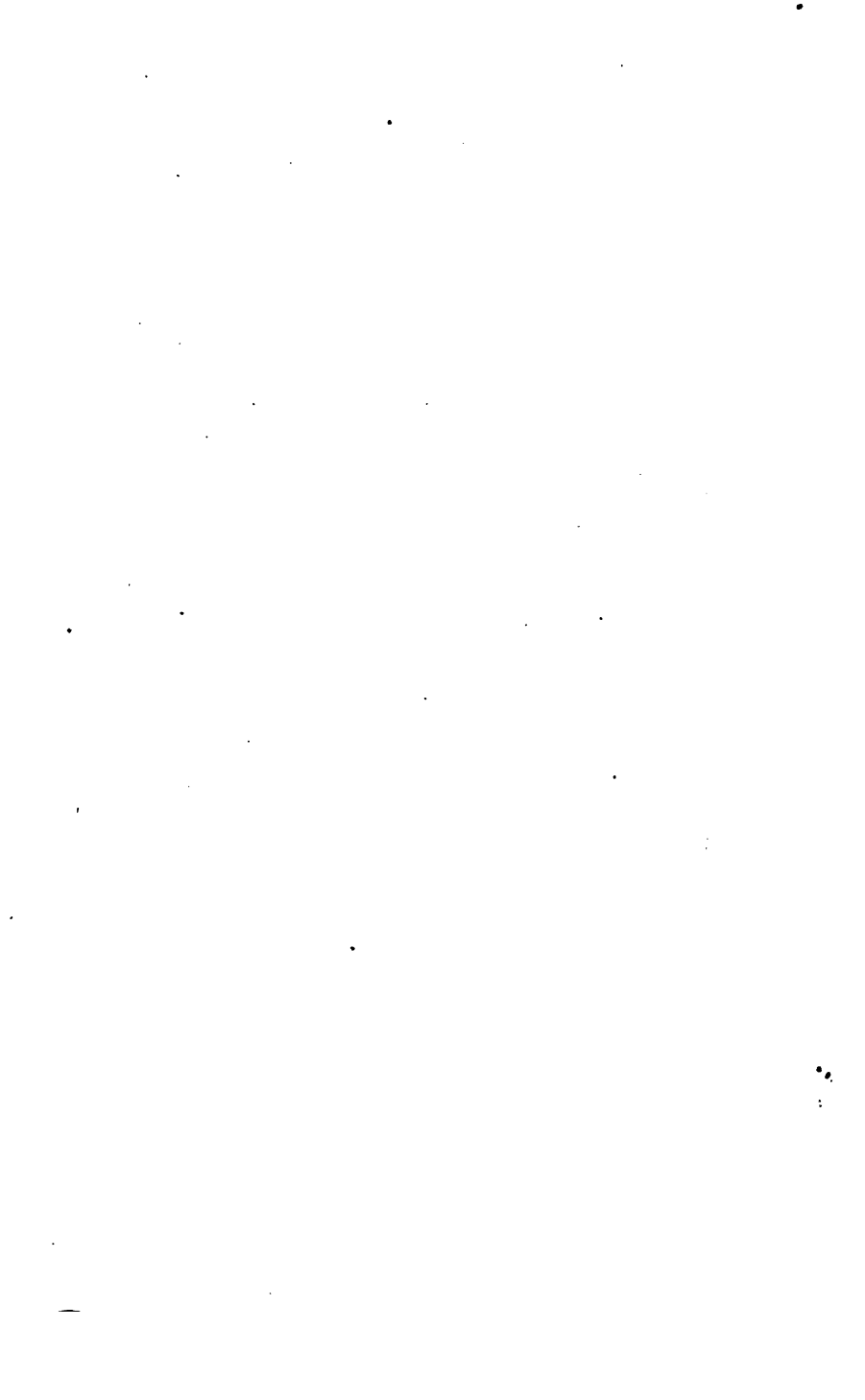
as the mosque is called Neby Haroun. This glen is completely filled with oleanders in full blossom. No rhododendron can vie with these trees, which, at a distance, appear like huge masses of roses.

We found some Fellaheen herding goats at the top of the pass into Wady Mousa, who appeared a wild and savage race. Here we tried to persuade a sulky boy to get us some milk, but without success.

At last we entered the famous valley, a wide glen formed by sandstone crags, towering high above our path, the sides of which were gleaming in the settingsun. Round their bases, scattered in all directions, wherever the eye rested, nothing was to be seen but tombs. Some are carved upon the surface of cliffs, ornamented and excavated as in Egypt; others, again, are cut off and isolated from the rocks, not as there, regularly placed in tiers along ledges of the hills, but scattered without order among the strange and fantastic pinnacles of sandstone which rise on every side. Some are mere caverns, others bear the marks of great labour and

ornament, but the rocks have crumbled away, and most of the work is effaced.

There is something appalling in the sight of these open graves, robbed of the corpses, once entombed with such speculative care and in so costly a fashion. The fragments of a great city are strewn amidst these rocks in countless masses, and a single column stands upon the plain, in itself a striking commentary. Near its base are broken capitals, marking out the spot where once some mighty temple reared its majestic form, the founder of which fancied that his edifice of a day would triumph over the silent march of time, and rival in age the works of the Creator. Yet we gaze upon the broken fabric, its beauty departed, its greatness overthrown, while the rock it was based upon is still unchanged like the purposes of the Almighty. Awfully, indeed, has His will been accomplished and worked out in Edom! and it is most instructive to remark how truly, in almost every particular, the severe denunciations of the prophets have in this region been fulfilled.



CHAPTER XXIII.

Wady Mousa—Petra—The Khasné—Tribes of the
Alouins.



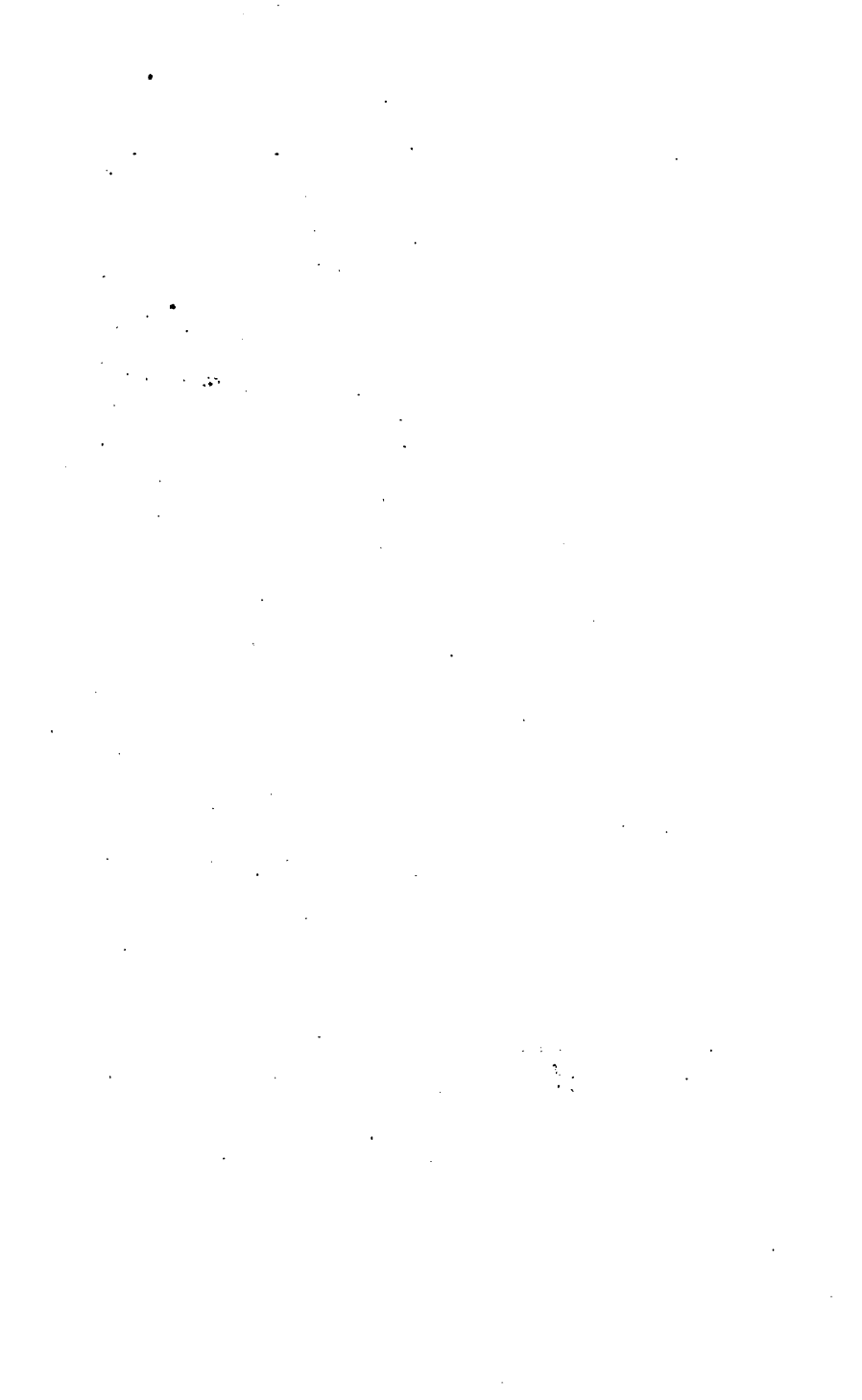
CHAPTER XXIII.

WE found our tent pitched under a huge rock, naturally enough devoted to such purposes; ruins and sepulchres extend on every side, and yet a garden of flowers smiles around our tent. Oleanders are blooming at our feet, wild flowers of every hue cover the crags, and the air is filled with the perfumes of jessamine.

Our home is in the bosom of Wady Mousa, that mysterious valley, the land of accomplished prophecy, the spot where prophecy has still to be fulfilled. Even this doomed city is to rise again from its ruins, and put forth its beauty and strength, when Israel shall be gathered to its own. But

now it is indeed the "valley of the shadow of Death." The King of Terrors frowns over the hollow rocks. The owl hoots, the vulture screams through the desolate dwellings and ransacked sepulchres, and the passing traveller learns a solemn lesson from beholding what neither books nor recital can adequately convey.

The theatre is not a hundred yards from our tents; thus we are in a good situation, or what must have been the west end of ancient Petra. Excavated out of the solid rock, the enclosure is a vast work. It consists of rows of stone steps or seats raised above one another, and all around it, in front and above, the crags are perforated with tombs. In the theatre itself, a little above the circle of steps encircling the arena, are also excavations at irregular intervals, and of various forms. Whether these were dens for wild beasts or "private boxes," as some one suggests, for the Idumæan aristocracy, I am unable to decide. The cliffs rising over and around it, the graves and tombs opening upon it, the blossoming shrubs covering the





J. B. W. 1847

A. Schmitt. 1843

THEATRE AT PETRA.

London: Henry Colburn, 1847.

neighbouring ground, and the solemn and awful stillness which reigns throughout the place once resounding with the shout of applause or the yell of disapprobation, form a most impressive scene.

Once countless thousands thronged these echoing rocks, and the beauty, the pride, and the chivalry of the day, enjoyed their brief hour of joy upon this spot. Death stared them in the face—the tombs of their ancestors or contemporaries were arrayed before them, foretelling, in solemn warning, that the end of these things was to come. They took no note of time, yet time with noiseless step advanced upon them and their works. The destroyer of empires spared not the haughty Edomites; the civilization and the power of imperial Rome could not save them, though they had made their nest with the eagle in the rock. The doom foretold by the prophet of God fell upon the accursed region, as it fell upon Egypt—as it awaits, perhaps, the modern Babylon; and their temples were cast down, their theatres and palaces overthrown, their people cut off

from the land, while the wild beasts and birds of prey made their abode in the solitude of desolation, and their fate is the complete accomplishment of the denunciation of the ministers of the Almighty.

The hues of the rocks are unlike anything in other regions. The iron, of which there must be a great deal in the district, has stained the sandstone with innumerable dyes, and a streaky veining runs through the strata, where all colours are blended together. In some parts the rocks seem covered with ribbons—in other places, from a distant view, they appear as if formed of marble of the richest and loveliest tints, and this material is sculptured into columns and porticoes—not always standing out in isolated masses, but cut upon the face of the cliffs. The interiors are neglected, consisting only of rude and rough chambers, some of which are merely holes or caverns. Others, again, like the larger tombs, must have demanded vast labour and expense. But it is a matter of doubt whether, of these edifices, the most striking and exten-

sive were really tombs, or whether they may not have been the palaces of the great. All, indeed, is food for conjecture and theory.

The structures appear in general to be Roman, and I doubt whether anything remains of an earlier age, except, perhaps, the mere excavations, or holes in the rocks, which are exactly similar to those in Egypt. But the theatre, the more costly tombs, and the edifices, are clearly of a very modern date compared to the period of Egyptian grandeur; so also is there a great inferiority in the architecture and design. What seems remarkable, is the custom of beginning to construct a tomb high up in the rock, using it for its purpose, then beginning another under the first excavation, and so on; leaving no means of returning to the original work, after once the corpse had been left there, which was probably done with a view to greater security.

Ibrahim told us of a strange tradition believed by the Bedouins. He said that when the sea of Lot or Bahr Lut (the Dead Sea) covered the cities which were destroyed by

fire from heaven, these mountains were also visited by the same fire, but the sea could not reach so far; this therefore was the cause of the red colour of the rocks, as well as of the splintered and rent appearance of the mountains.

The Syk, or approach leading into Petra, from the country of the Fellaheen, is a magnificent defile. Narrow as a mere foot-path in some parts, it rends asunder crags more than two hundred feet high, excluding the sun, and in many spots almost closing over head. This remarkable chasm is covered from end to end with a copse of oleanders, so that it is difficult to pass through the flowers, which bloom on all sides. The wild fig springs from the cleft of the rock; the brier and the ivy fall in festoons from the crags; the desert broom and other evergreen shrubs grow among the stones in the wildest luxuriance, and the bright lights and shadows, cast upon the streaked sides of the gorge, form a remarkable combination of exquisite beauty and savage grandeur.

In this defile, where Nature seems to have placed her loveliest progeny to sleep upon the breast of the sternest part of her creation, the wild flowers blossom round the path of the Fellah or the Bedouin, who brushes them aside without a thought of their colour or their fragrance, passing with equal neglect or contempt the magnificent efforts of skill of former ages; and who turning aside from the portico and column, the rich façade of the *Khasné*, or the wondrous circle of the theatre, betakes himself to his hut or his tent, in utter indifference as to how the rocks became palaces, or the clefts of the cliffs produced the rich blossoms which cluster there.

Passing onwards, through a thicket of flowers, we came upon a gentle winding ascent, the cliffs seldom varying in height, and the passage very little in breadth. At a sudden turn, the rocks seemed to close over our heads, and a deep shadow was cast on our track. Beyond it the light streamed in from above, and where the sunbeams fell with their full tide of power, we saw before

us, in a flood of brilliance, the rosy columns of the Khasné. All in Petra must yield to this structure; there is a finish and perfection of grace about it which stamps no other work. Its proportions are on a grand scale; and, indeed, the crags would smother it were it not of immense size. No description will ever do justice to it—no pencil can ever portray the brilliancy of the colouring; but in its bed of flowers, buried in the heart of the mountain gorge, and hiding its beauties in the chasms of a precipice, it stands alone in the catalogue of earth's riches, perhaps the loveliest creation of man, not less perfect, though different in form or colouring, than the blossoms which nature has scattered round its base.

A lofty chamber forms the interior, wherein travellers have inscribed their names. One English lady had left her tribute at this altar of desert beauty. After bearing such fatigue, and travelling so many weary miles to pay her devotions at this shrine, it was scarcely possible to read without pride the name of Charlotte Rowley, on the sand-

stone of Petra's fairy temple. This was an English flower not misplaced among the bright ones that encompass it. Long and eagerly we gazed upon this wondrous structure, till the evening sun, as if envious of our pleasure, caused the bright colouring to fade away, while darker shadows descended and veiled the beauty of its proportions.

We resumed our course up the pass, over the broken remnants of the ancient paved causeway by which Petra was approached. Fragments of rock, rent away from the crags, lie everywhere along the defile, yet the shrubs and trees spring from among them, and give charms to their savageness. At last, we reached the arch which spans the ravine. Perhaps, this was neither a bridge nor an ornamental arch, but an aqueduct. At the end of the gorge, we found some remains of tombs, and a little further, a tunnel of about thirty feet high, a hundred and twenty long, and forty wide, leading into a deep valley containing some fields badly cultivated by the Fellahs. This passage through the rock has not been men-

tioned among the other wonders of Petra; I conclude, therefore, that no one has visited it. Through large chasms in the rocks, we made the circuit of the town on the exterior of the girdle of cliffs which surround it to the east, wandering through alternate precipices and valleys, in some parts so steep, that we were obliged to discard our shoes for security.

Presently our guides came to a pass where they seemed to lose the track, and certainly it appeared a work of magic to thread our way through this labyrinth of stone; but after several attempts, the outlet was discovered, and sliding down a precipice, we arrived in a valley terminating at the north of the city. Here, there was another ruined bridge or aqueduct high among the rocks; and opposite to us, crowning a height, appeared the ruined walls of a castle or fortress. This glen, which here is crowded with sepulchres and buildings of the usual character, contains the Corinthian tomb. Rising on the heights, immediately above our tents, the English flag has been hoisted

on the Sheikh's tufted spear, and floats proudly among the ruins of the Idumæans.

Thus passed our first day in Wady Mousa, among the wildest tribes of the Desert, in perfect freedom from annoyance; and we were guided by the formidable Fellaheen, who attend upon us, and sleep near our tents. As usual, watch-fires are lighted, and the camels are driven in at night; but precautions appear unnecessary, for the only sounds that break the silence of the valley, are the hooting of the owls or the distant cry of the fox or jackal.

July 2nd.—To-day, to our surprise, our Akaba friends, the Alouins, arrived to levy contributions, and I found at least twenty new comers in consultation with our party. But Ibrahim settled the matter at once by declaring that he was paymaster and responsible, and that if they touched anything or demanded a para, he would make them refund five times the amount at Hebron. After a long dispute they departed, merely asking for a little tobacco. I do not think Ibrahim will be easily contradicted or brow-

beaten. His manner, whether with us or the Arabs, is quiet and firm; he says very little, neither screams nor roars like the rest, and never comes into our tent without asking leave.

After the heat of the day had moderated, we strolled up to the Khasné, with a strong body guard of three Fellaheen, and two of our own people with Taif Allah. There never was a better guide than the Sheikh; from the first he has proved himself willing to do everything in his power for us, and anxious that we should be pleased. At the same time his people are in good discipline, and he makes himself obeyed without cavil or dispute. His action when giving orders is graceful and commanding; every motion is natural, and his fine frame towers above all who surround him. It is a painful disadvantage to be ignorant of the language of these people, for they have no respect for an interpreter, whom they always, and with much reason, distrust.

From the Khasné, we returned to the theatre, and, ascending to the heights above,

surveyed the whole site of this extraordinary scene. Even at the summit of these towering cliffs, which are here at least 200 feet high, and extremely rugged and precipitous, the labours and skill of man are conspicuous everywhere. Upon every face of the hills where the eye rests, the vestiges of tombs and excavations are visible from the base to the pinnacles; almost all, however, are obliterated to a great degree by the waters and the action of the sun. Gardens cut in the rock supplied the Edomite with his grapes and figs; staircases cut in the stone are to be traced in all parts; and terraces and galleries are distinctly marked out. The mountains are intersected with numerous conduits, for the passage of the waters which once fertilized this Eden of the rock; but at this period of the year there is no stream even in the brook of Wady Mousa. The Arabs of the hills near Elgy have cut off the supply to irrigate their fields, and we have a long way to send for anything that is palatable. The first supply the Arabs brought us was putrid, for they

would not take the trouble of bringing it from the more distant and wholesome well.

Above the theatre are some ruins, with an excavation resembling a large shallow tank, and two very insignificant obelisks, all of which are more or less in ruins, and nearly worn away by the weather.

By broken steps and fragments of stone, the valley on the other side was reached. Here we found more sepulchres, and particularly two mentioned by Laborde: one marked by a flight of steps at its base, the other ornamented with fluted columns in the interior.

July 3rd. — To-day the Alouins reappeared, having, probably, decided upon renewing their claims upon us for some tribute. A dozen horses were picketed in various positions round the tents, and a large circle of Bedouins were collected in debate. The Arabian chargers were handsomer than any we had seen. The Arab will not sell his mare at any price, unless the purchaser pledge himself to give him some of the produce. The animals are ragged looking and

bony, but the small head and expanding nostril, the beautiful quarters and perfect symmetry of shape, excite unmixed admiration. Their coats are glossy, and though little or no care is bestowed upon them, they can endure the hardest work, and never stumble or trip even in the worst roads.

The Alouins heard of our coming at Akaba, and therefore had come to demand that their camels should be engaged. The old story was repeated, but Ibrahim and Taif Allah informed them that we were under the protection of Tahir Pacha, and that, if they insisted upon being employed, they would be obliged to refund their gains at Hebron, and might take the consequences. We left them disputing, and, following the course of the brook of Wady Mousa, reached the Serai Pharaon, as the Arabs call it, a square edifice, of which very little that is ornamented remains. This was probably an extensive palace, for the remains of an arch of entrance may be found in front of it.

Passing onwards, the hills gradually closed in around our path, while here and

there appeared small platforms of rock decked with verdant shrubs. As we advanced into this romantic glen, the scene became at every step more lovely; oleanders of thirty feet high, innumerable wild flowers, and creepers in full bloom, sprang from the fissures of the cliffs. The evergreens were so thick that they had been cut away to open out a camel-track. The vine, too, spread its tendrils among the branches that sheltered us from the sun, and clusters of grapes were hanging, in festooned arches, over our heads. Further on were large mulberry-trees covered with fruit, myriads of birds started from the cliffs, pigeons and doves were on the wing in every direction, and we heard the wild call of the partridge on all sides.

We spent an hour in this most lovely glen resting by the spring from which our camp is supplied. How strange it is to witness the utter destruction of the works of man in a scene where nature triumphs over all, apparently as fresh and young as on the first day of creation. Her sweetest smiles

are shed upon these secluded and sheltered valleys. The flowers spring forth, the trees and shrubs flourish as luxuriantly as ever, man alone here seems debased and degraded to the level of the brute. Melancholy is the sight of such rich gifts neglected, and such profuse abundance and capability utterly thrown away? Who planted the vine, and the fig-tree, the mulberry, and the pomegranate?—not the Bedouin who gathers the fruit with thankless avidity, yet never cultivates the productive soil, nor lives in plenty, like the Edomite of old.

When we returned, the Alouins had made no sign of departing: Taif Allah desiring to get rid of them, requested twenty piastres to buy some food for their horses, and this he said would be a hint which they would not fail to take.

There are, it seems, three tribes of Alouins—first, Abou Djazi, then Abou Raschid, and then Ben Giad, of which our friend Hussein, of Akaba, is the acknowledged head, though Abou Djazi is his rival; and these united form a race called Häweitat, distinct both

from the Tiyayah and the Jellaheen. Abou Zeitun is the Sheikh or chief of Wady Mousa, and expects a small tribute from the traveller for the occupation of his territory, and the feeding of strange camels; but the object of the Alouins is a demand to carry part of our baggage, and to be paid together with the tribe that conducted us to Wady Mousa, to which they have no right, as the place does not belong to their territory. It is clear that, had we arrived without Ibrahim, Taif Allah would have been obliged to pay them. Their array of horses and tufted spears, though guns were not exhibited, showed something very like an intention to carry their point, and I have no doubt but that the camels and dromedaries were not very far off, with a reinforcement of men and fire-arms, if necessary. At last, after receiving their money from Taif Allah, they slowly and sulkily mounted, and, forming in a body, moved off up the valley, where their long spears and wild figures soon disappeared behind the deep shadows of the Syk.

Over the rocky waste, which lies exactly

under the high mountains of Edom, the continuation of the chain of Moab, an extraordinary prospect presents itself. Acres upon acres of massive stone are piled high above the plain. In some parts, these, the natural bulwarks of ancient Sela, present themselves like a sea of domes, worn into circular outlines, or conical forms, by the winter torrents. In others, they rise like broken pinnacles of a Gothic cathedral. Here we found some Fellaheen with their goats, who embraced our guides and saluted us, and a little further we discovered our departed guests, the Alouins, bivouacked under a rock. We did not seek to renew civilities, but passing onward through a barrier of stone, penetrating narrow chasms and rents, descended upon the brook of Wady Mousa.



CHAPTER XXIV.

**Ruins of El Deir—Khasné—Wady Araba—Course of
the Jordan—Shore of the Dead Sea.**



CHAPTER XXIV.

JULY 4th.—After the Khasné, the most remarkable structure here is El Deir, the convent, which name is given by the Arabs to almost every edifice about which uncertainty prevails. Leaving the Serai Pharaon, we ascended into the recesses of the mountains, passing by the homestead of some Fellaheen, where a hole in the rock contained an ass, a few goats, some wretched blankets, two naked children, and an old crone.

At the base of the rocks are the remains of a staircase, at least five hundred feet in length, and in many parts twelve in breadth. This conducts the Arab and his

goats, or the adventurous pilgrim from foreign lands—the only passers by—to the ruins of the temple. Facing Mount Hor, it overlooks deep precipices and ravines, rendering its site more isolated than that of the Khasné. But the fabric will bear no comparison with that matchless gem, either in the colour of its material, or its execution. The interior consists as usual of a large chamber, where, as in the Khasné, there do not appear to be any of those arrangements for sepulture which are seen in other excavations, but there is a space for an altar as in an Egyptian temple. This building was probably used as a place of worship, as it is unlikely that private enterprise would have formed a mountain into a staircase and excavated a palace on its summit.

The Fellaheen will not inhabit the tombs. In the winter, their goats find shelter among them, but the dwellings of man are in the clefts of the stone, and while the Theban sepulchres are thickly inhabited, the yawning graves of Petra are untenanted, except

by animals, while the Arab prefers the hill-side and the shadow of the oleanders in the rock. Small is Sela among the heathen, and despised among men. Every one that goeth by is astonished.

We visited the Khasné to take our last farewell. Beautiful—most beautiful temple! I shall never see thee more! But while memory lasts, the wanderer from a far distant land, who spent some fleeting moments at thy base, will do thee mental homage. The lovely vision of thy form will rise before him like a fairy fabric, more fit for dreams than reality. May time spare—may the Arab cease to deface thee—may the doom that has visited all around be averted from thy glories; may it be thine appointed task to demonstrate the present and the past, thy sacred office to instruct the human race; may the sun spare, the shadow protect, the air pass harmless over thee, the water fear to destroy thee; may the sins of those who made thy pinnacles so high and bid thy fair proportions spring from the rugged rocks, never be visited upon the fairest work of

their hands. But long may the lesson be read upon thy sculptured walls, that the purposes of the Omniscient are fixed and certain as His power. The warning voice of prophecy is no longer heard, neither are there any visible signs or handwritings on the wall, but thou, and such as thou, art made for our learning. May that Almighty hand that cast down the city of which thou wast the brightest ornament, that has spared thee hitherto amid the wreck of kingdoms, and palaces, and tombs, preserve thee still to fulfil a righteous task, to warn, bear witness, and to instruct mankind.

July 6th.—Yesterday, we gazed for the last time upon the valley where we had spent so many peaceful hours; and the last sunset we can ever behold there lighted up the brilliant rocks, and bathed the ruins in a flood of fire. We bade a long adieu to the oleanders that bloomed before our tent, longing to carry them away to another land.

Our night was undisturbed, and with the earliest dawn we were skirting the Corinthian

tomb on our right, and slowly winding up the pass leading to the great defile of Nemela, through which lies the descent of Wady Araba. About an hour from Petra we halted, to fill our skins, at a large reservoir, cut in the rock. Water was here in great abundance, filtering from the rocks above the tank, over which there was a roof supported by arches. From a village called Dibdibe, we proceeded through the pass, that is imposing enough in its way, but much inferior in beauty to that leading round the base of Mount Hor; and, after a long and fatiguing day, arrived at a salt spring in the midst of Wady Araba.

July 7th.—As we found that lying under a leafless acacia, in the midst of the sandiest part of the desert, at mid-day, with the sun in his fullest power, and the shade unsteady and partial, was not an agreeable position, we advanced towards the Dead Sea, leaving El Weibe and Es Sufeh, the pass we had descended before on our left. The heat is greater than we have as yet felt, and the reflection from the sand very painful.

July 8th.—Passing Wady Hasb, we continued our march through Wady Araba, and at last leaving Mount Hor, long the most conspicuous mountain of the ridge far behind us, we re-entered Wady-el-Jeib, a large and leading artery of Wady Araba. Here sand-cliffs began to show themselves as if there was a formation across the valley, which is the commencement of the Ghor. We encamped in a deep glen, from the top of which a partial view was obtained of the Dead Sea.

I decline to subscribe to the opinion that the Jordan cannot have formerly passed down Wady Araba; the Dead Sea being below the level of the Red Sea, does not alter the case, for a great body of water would find its way along the Araba, increased, as in winter it must naturally be, by mountain torrents, even though the basin from which it issued be below the level of the sea. In the valley there are water-courses in every direction, as well towards Akaba as towards the Dead Sea, where it seems to be the fashion to suppose that the Jordan in all times lost itself.

It is quite true that the cliffs near the Ghor, present a barrier at present, over which no river could pass, but it is quite within the bounds of probability that this obstacle was created by the catastrophe of the cities of the plain. If one convulsion took place, was another impossible? The position of the country seems to mark clearly the course of a great river down to the gulf of the Red Sea. I think some travellers have made up their minds beforehand to start new theories, and contradict all received opinions without good or sufficient grounds, and as there are explorers who have no traditions in their own countries, it does not seem unnatural that they should wish to attack those that may exist in others.

We left our camp, reaching the shore of the Dead Sea by a gentle descent through the sand cliffs of the Ghor. Here a large and marshy expanse extends itself, covered with brushwood, intersected by pools of brackish water. At one of these, called Ain Arus, or the Bride's Fountain, we refreshed ourselves, and proceeded along the shore.

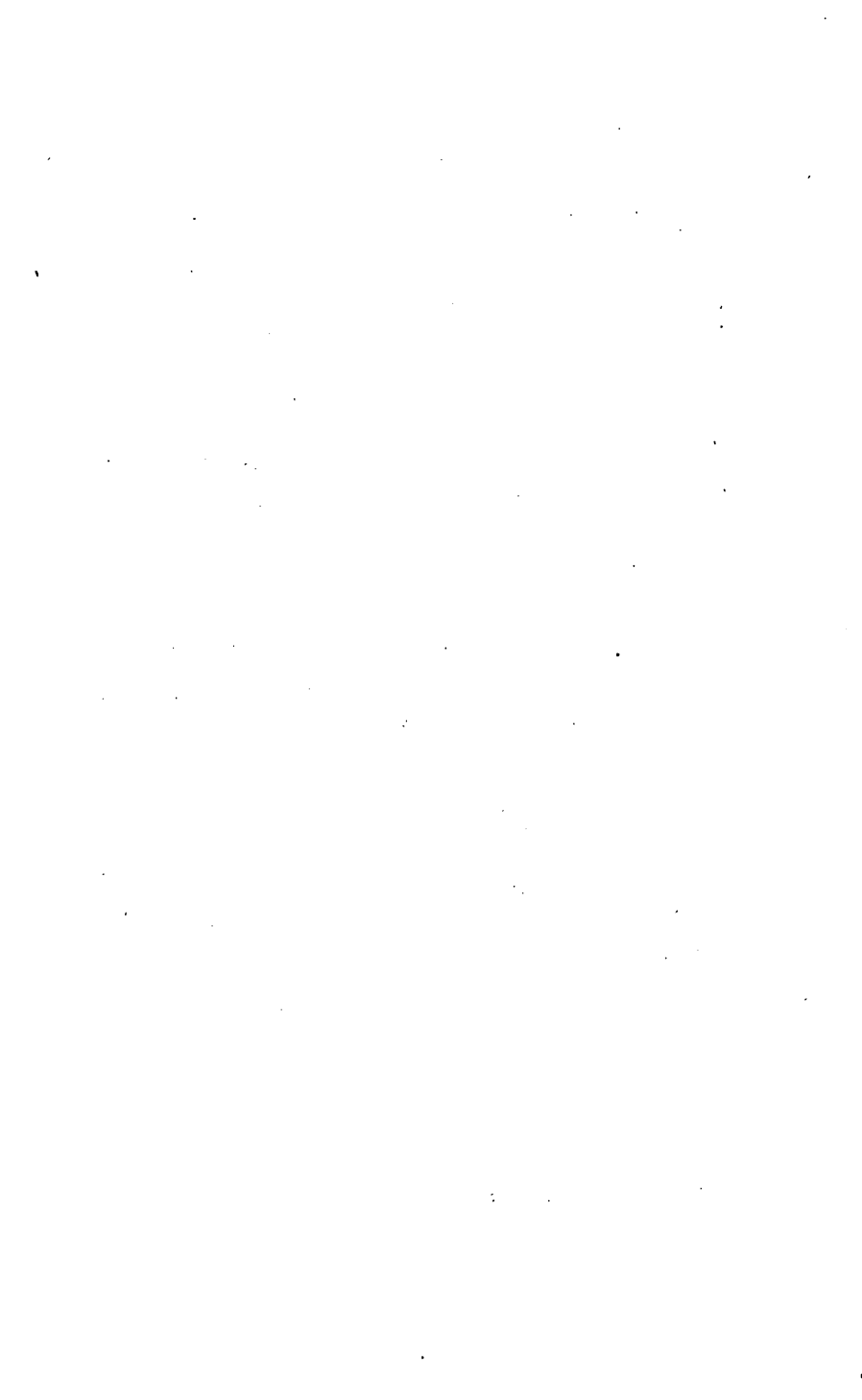
We passed over the low ground nearest the Ghor to the beach, against which the ripple of the waters made a refreshing but delusive sound, for their sound was far more agreeable than their taste. Here we found the mountains of Usdum, a range of high rocks composed entirely of salt, the particles of which covered the shore, and the crystals, where they are not coated with sand, sparkle in the sun, like diamonds. The rocks are remarkable only for their shattered and blasted appearance, and they do not possess a vestige either of vegetation or of life.

The beach is strewed with remnants of another portion of Ibrahim Pacha's army; most fitting accompaniments for such a region. A cavern sheltered us for a while, and we bathed in the doomed waters. Nothing more nauseous or more bitter can be imagined; so deeply impregnated with salt is the sea that the body smarts on entering it. It was buoyant enough to carry us off our legs, but the dip was anything but refreshing, and an oiliness pervaded our skins for several hours afterwards.

We left the salt range of Usdum, at the mouth of Wady Zuweireh, which extends from the mountains to the shore, and proceeding inland, after a tedious but gradual ascent, reached a ruined fort, apparently built in order to command the entrance of the pass. A long and dreary ride brought us to a small valley, where we encamped for the night.

July 9th.—We continued our course across the ridge nearest to the Dead Sea, and after a weary march descried the tower of Kurmul, where we had encamped on the first night of our journey.

July 10th.—Having sent off the baggage and tent to Jerusalem, we decided on remaining for a day at Hebron. We were kindly received at a Jewish house, the owner of which had been very hospitable to us, as we passed through on our road to Petra.



CHAPTER XXV.

Great Mosque of Omar—Mosque of El Aksa—Pools
of Solomon—Sheikh Said of Gaza—Convent of
Mar-Saba—Latin Convent—The French Bishop
of Babylon—Tahir Pacha.



CHAPTER XXV.

JULY 12th.—Once more we are within the precincts of the Holy City. My friend, the French doctor, had promised to ascertain whether any means could be found of entering the great Mosque of Omar. Having paid a certain sum, disguised in a Turkish dress, I was handed over to the Sheikh Effendi, one of the guardians of the mosque. The doctor lent me his uniform, which I buttoned to the chin, together with a pair of very thin and rather ragged white trowsers, and a pair of old shoes. He also gave me his sword, so that I was well got up, and looked the character of an ill-looking Moslem, to perfection. My instruc-

tions were not to open my lips to any one who spoke to me, or if I was pressed hard, to utter merely the words "Sheikh Effendi." I was not to offer money to any one, but to take off my shoes and imitate my companion in everything.

After an hour's walk through the dirtiest lanes in the town, we reached a dark passage, where two old Turks in white turbans were in waiting. I was at once consigned to these new actors in the scene, and before any attempt at explanation could be made, my original conductor had vanished. For some time I was conducted up and down various alleys, my guides keeping the strictest silence. At last, we emerged into the great square and trod the pavement of the mosque. The great dome glimmered in the moonshine, but we passed by it, and I could see that the Sheikhs were leading the way to the small mosque of El Aksa, which is reputed even more holy than its neighbour, and here we halted at the door to take off our shoes.

The mosque is a large building, half hall,

half barn, supported on each side by pillars. From the roof hang two circular chandeliers of wood. There is literally nothing to remark upon here, nor is it in any respect different from the mosques of Egypt. The situation of the great mosque, planted in the midst of the paved marble enclosure, with its melancholy cypresses, rising like dark obelisks among the sculptured arches, is very striking.

As we advanced towards the mysterious dome, suddenly two people crossed us. The Sheikh Effendi turned aside in another direction, and I followed, but on finding that we were deliberately moving out of the great square, I remonstrated by signs, and pointed to the great mosque. The Sheikh seized my hand, and urged me forward. An instant's reflection proved to me that remonstrance was useless, and that blind obedience was the only course I could follow. I was now hurried along, and taken out of the square by another entrance, the Sheikh holding my arm, and half dragging me over bad pavement and through narrow lanes,

till we met with the original guides. There was hardly time to recognise them, before the Sheikh and his companion had vanished. Here I could not explain myself, and was obliged to gulp down my feelings till I reached home, and could make myself understood.

My guides declared that the Sheikh had been alarmed by the people he met, and had retreated; that he had conducted me into the most sacred place—the Mosque of El Aksa—and it was clear that he would have visited the other also, had not something occurred to startle him. I had not mentioned to my companions my intention—no one knew, therefore, where I was, and the disagreeable thought, while I was wandering with the Sheikh Effendi, in the forbidden precincts, often came across me, that I might be murdered and flung into a hole without any one being the wiser.

July 14th.—We visited the three pools constructed by Solomon as reservoirs for the city. From here the temple was supplied with water, and the same source has,

in later years, been brought to the Mosque of Omar, which occupies its place. But I was told that Ibrahim Pacha destroyed the conduits, which, however, are now under repair.

It is curious to see how much is laid to Ibrahim Pacha's account. Every grave circumstance of oppression or tyranny is attributed to the acts of his government; and yet, with all these complaints, the Turks are abused in every quarter. Matters appear to be retrograding in Syria, and the system which England was mainly instrumental in bringing about, does not tend either to the internal tranquillity or prosperity of the country. The Porte, too weak to levy its imposts at a distance from the centre of its unwieldy empire, deposes the right of extortion to those who are able and willing to acquire the power of despoiling and harassing the peasantry.

Sheikh Said of Gaza, formerly a Fellah, now one of the richest proprietors in the country, fat with plunder and robbery, is the "middle man" between the government

and that part of the country south of Jerusalem, which is under his authority. He pays an annual tribute to the Porte, and for this consideration is suffered to extort from the peasants as much as he can, in order to repay himself. Of course, this power is exercised without mercy, and consequently there are no bounds to the vexatious and intolerable oppression under which the district labours. He exacts as much again as he has any right to do, and, aided by the local authorities, whether Pacha or petty governor, grinds down the wretched people under his sway, till they become desperate.

Several Arabs in various places declared to me that they were all armed, and prepared to revolt, and that England ought to assist them, and put an end to this state of affairs, for that the power of Sheikh Said was used to crush every hope of better times; and whereas under Ibrahim Pacha and Mehemet Ali they had, at least, a tolerable existence, at present, they were almost starved, and in the utmost poverty. Often their friends or relations were kept in prison

until their families were able to raise the sums required; to do which, in many cases, was utterly out of their power. The main objection they seem to have entertained against Mehemet Ali was the forced recruiting for the army. In Jerusalem, too, a man named Chibly Anton, is invested with the right of levying duties or imposts, and exercises it without mercy.

July 15th.—The convent of Mar-Saba is situated in the wilderness of Engeddi, about half way between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. The road to it winds across and round the base of uncultivated and rocky mountains, where, at intervals, appeared the encampments or low dark tents of the more pastoral Bedouins. They, as well as other tribes to the east of the Dead Sea, bear a bad character, and it is not as safe now as formerly, under the Pacha's rule, to venture among them without a Janizary or a guard; indeed, they sometimes rob in the day time, when they can do so with impunity, even close under the walls of the Holy City. The Turks are too indolent or timid to check the spoilers,

who are off again to their fastnesses before they can be detected.

After three hours' ride we entered a ravine, the sides of which were almost perpendicular: this is the more singular, because no formation resembles it in this part of the country, and it was more like the glens of Wady Mousa, except that here the burning sun was reflected from naked rocks; not a blade of grass or a desert shrub appearing in any part of it. The cliffs were perforated with holes and caves, some built up roughly with stones, others yawning in the clefts of the hills, and in these rude dwellings lived the monks or hermits of former times.

Passing along the brink of the gradually deepening ravine, we arrived at the monastery. From this approach, nothing is seen but a high wall, as at Sinai, and it is only on descending the glen, and looking upwards at the building, that its position appears to advantage. It is situated on the rocks of the chasm, and the various parts of the fabric are connected together by staircases, which also afford a passage into the ravine.

The defile, with its cells and caves, is not to be compared with those of Petra. The convent is not equal in position to that of Sinai, nor can its pigmy hills and chasms rival the awful summits of Horeb and Gebel Katerin. The church is poor and tawdry, and the decorations tarnished and worn. A pyramid of skulls is piled up as an altar—the remains of those of the fraternity who were murdered by the Turks, in vast numbers, some centuries back.

July 16th.—Jerusalem is certainly not a healthy residence. In spite of the high situation of the Armenian convent, the air is oppressive, though, if there is a breath of wind, it has the benefit of the breeze. In many parts of the town there is such an accumulation of garbage and filth, which the inhabitants are too lazy to remove, that, when the sun penetrates the festering heaps, the odours become intolerable. This inconvenience is felt principally in the Jews' quarter, where the necessity of slaughtering cattle in public is the only excuse for leaving the offal scattered upon the ground under

the very windows of the houses. The answer made, upon remonstrance, is, that it would occupy too much time to kill the animals outside the walls of the city, and, in the meanwhile, the people pass through life without improvement, allowing fever and pestilence to be engendered in the atmosphere they breathe, without making the slightest effort to avert the cause. Almost all the Europeans here are suffering from low fever, approaching to typhus. The whole of the Bishop's family have been on the sick-list, which is not to be wondered at, for his house is in a low and unhealthy situation.

July 17th.—The Latin Convent is inferior in size, and apparently in cleanliness and accommodation, to the Armenian. The monks have become less civil to the English, since the appointment of a bishop, and we heard that when a traveller, who had lately left Jerusalem for Jaffa, applied on his return to be re-admitted, the fraternity, to his great surprise, refused, saying, they did not want him or any of his nation. Their hos-

pitality is bad, and very dear, and what is given in return scarcely ever satisfies them.

July 18.—To-day, while resting under the olives of Gethsemane, a group of persons approached from the town, who, in Spain, would have passed for members of the Holy Inquisition, from the peculiarity of their costume. We ascertained that the escort accompanied no less a person than the new Bishop of Babylon, whom the French have appointed as a set-off against the English episcopate. As the key of the chapel of the Virgin could not be immediately produced, he began to scold and gesticulate in a very unclerical manner. He was dressed in a Spanish broad-brimmed beaver, was enveloped in a long black robe, and wore the order of the Legion of Honour, with a silk sash of green richly embroidered.

July 19th.—Tahir Pacha, the military governor of Jerusalem, is a perfect specimen of his race. We found him to-day in full divan, with a large society of Turks, one of whom, possessed of a most repulsive countenance, turned out to be the notorious Sheikh

Said, who has lately been raised to the rank of Bey. Once a poor Fellah, he now can boast of three sons who have been severally nominated civil governors of Gaza, Jaffa, and Jerusalem. Such are the rewards in this country of cruelty and despotism! Tahir Pacha at first spoke to us through the dragoman of the consulate, but afterwards summoned his own interpreter, who had visited England with Reschid Pacha, though he did not profit much by the opportunity.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Samaria—Valleys of Ephraim—Djanin—Nazareth—
Acre—Tyre—Sidon—Beirout.



CHAPTER XXVI.

JULY 21st.—Bidding farewell to the Holy City, we passed over a dreary district of stony hills, with bad cultivation and wretched crops. The country is covered with ruined sites, and in many places tombs are excavated in the rocks.

After halting at mid-day near a fountain, situated beyond the village of El-Bir, we descended into a beautiful valley, which extended for a great distance through lofty hills, covered with the most luxuriant verdure. Every kind of fruit-tree known in these countries adorned this region; the vines were flourishing on all sides with the fig and the olive, and there was abundance of water to fertilize the soil.

Passing a village, planted among the

hills, the name of which was said to be Sheyka, we turned away from the road to Nablous, at a town called Singan, where the whole village turned out, with the Sheikh El-Bellad at their head, who came to levy a tribute, under the pretext of placing guards near our tents to protect the baggage—the said guards being the most likely people to plunder it.

July 22nd.—Our tent is pitched between two olive-trees at the foot of the hill, on which stand the last vestiges of Samaria. An old tower, and the remains of a church built by the Empress Helena, mark the spot where the Baptist was beheaded, and cover his supposed tomb. Above these, stands the ruined palace of Herod. Mountains, once cultivated to their summits, rise in desolate grandeur round the city. The site of it is covered with olives, and a copious stream flows through some ill-cultivated gardens, the only remains of the once-proud Samaria. Every step we now take discloses some locality of deep interest; but these scenes are well known, and have been often described.

July 23rd.—We ride thirty miles a day, at a foot's pace, over roads that would be impassable for English horses, through rugged defiles, over steep rocks, and along causeways of crumbling stones. We left Sebaste, or Samaria, at the hour when the women of the village were seeking the wells in the hollow of the valley, bearing large pitchers on their heads, with remarkable grace and ease. Here we first saw female faces, for in this district the veils disappear; but the women take no notice of strangers, and pass by our tents as if a caravan were an occurrence of every day.

The valleys of Ephraim were rich with crops, springing almost unbidden from this fruitful soil, irrigated by numerous and abundant springs. The hills, as usual, are covered with ruined terraces, but no man cares to sow more than he can reap, and the peasant is so accustomed to be ground down by every sort of impost, that he hesitates to seek more than a scanty subsistence.

After a long ride through the mountains, we reached Djanin, and bivouacked outside

the town, under a huge mulberry tree, near a refreshing stream. The great plain of Esdraelon commences here, which we traversed, halting at a village called Afouli, near a redoubt constructed by Napoleon. The plain is of vast extent, entirely cultivated, and certainly appears a fit locality for the battle field of nations.

July 24th.—The sun rose behind Mount Tabor, and soon the hills of Nazareth appeared before us. We looked upon the mountain tops, upon which the eye of our Saviour had rested—perhaps, our steps were following the pathway He trod. He must have looked upon these landmarks as familiar objects, and the rocks where we halted might have afforded Him also a shelter.

The Convent Church exhibited the accustomed mummeries. Here is said to be situated the workshop of Joseph, and the high altar covers the house where he dwelt. Ascending a defile, we lost sight of the Mosque of Nazareth, and soon reached Cana of Galilee, now an insignificant village. Our course lay along the plain of Hottein, famous as the

battle-field where Saladin fought for the last time with the Crusaders, and destroyed their army. At last, the blue waves of Tiberias were seen beneath us, and the white foam sparkled brightly on the surface of the rippling waters. Djebel Sheikh, or Mount Hermon, with his snowy crown, rose in solemn majesty on the right of our track, while on our left appeared the wooded top of Mount Tabor. Passing near a ruined castle, and those remnants of fortification which have survived successive earthquakes, we rode our tired horses down the rocks, and before sunset were cooling our weary limbs in the sacred waters.

July 25th.—Having to-day varied our pleasures by visiting and bathing in the hot springs, over which Ibrahim Pacha has constructed an edifice for the convenience of those who repair to them, we returned towards the plain of Hottein by the track we had previously descended, and passing Cana on our left, halted for the night at a small village called Turan, which deserves no description, for the situation is dreary and ex-

posed. The same stratification seems to extend all through this country, and the hills are mostly covered with brushwood, but timber is not to be seen. About two hours farther on, we caught the first glimpse of the Mediterranean, and pressed our horses across the wide plains of Acre, under a burning sun, eager to plunge into the blue waves that smiled so temptingly before us.

Acre is visible from a great distance, situated in the centre of extensive plains, where many a battle has been lost and won. The traveller presses a soil rich in historic recollections, and stained with the heart's blood of Europe. He remembers that chivalrous age, when England sent her best and bravest children across the faithless ocean to these desert sands, to do battle against an enemy not less heroic than themselves. Can he gaze upon that low mount, to the eastward of the town, without picturing to his mind St. George's banner, broad and gay, floating proudly from its summit, by the tent of the Lion-King, whose deathless name still graces the spot? Can he forget the war-

riors, sheathed in steel, who braved the scorching rays of a Syrian sun, the dangers of the waves, the horrors of pestilence and famine, the misery of long absence from all they loved, to struggle for the true faith, against the false creed of the gallant Saracen? How many a noble heart shed its last life-blood on these shores, when merry England was widowed and childless, and her bravest chief became an exile and a prisoner. The Pagan, it is true, triumphed over the Christian; but the deeds of the chivalry of Europe, upon these bloody fields, were worthy of a better fate.

Later times have again invested this arena of martial strife with more modern, but not less brilliant glory. Here it was that Sidney Smith foiled and discomfited Napoleon, who directed his attack from the Mount of Cœur de Lion; and still more recently, Acre, garrisoned and fortified more strongly than it had ever been, fell after three hours' cannonade, before the power of England.

We pitched our tents under King Rich-

ard's Mount, where a solitary fig tree represented the Royal Standard. In the town, scarcely a house has escaped the marks of shot or shell. The authorities are hard at work rebuilding and fortifying, so that when we desired to walk round the ramparts, our progress was stopped by the troops. Mount Carmel is a beautiful object, as seen from here, but we had visited enough convents, and as nothing remarkable exists there, we took our leave of Acre.

July 27th.—The road from Acre to Tyre winds along the coast, diverging inland where the cliffs are perpendicular. The scenery is fine, without being grand, and some of the passes are striking, particularly Ras Abbiad, or the White Cape. The road is cut into the face of the cliff, under which, the sea rolls into a vast cavern, with a sound like thunder. The remains of a ruined Phœnician city are marked out to the stranger, by two columns standing amidst piles of stone-work, on an eminence near the sea. Other pillars, with capitals and shafts are lying on the spot, which, in

all probability, was formerly occupied by a large temple. The number and extent of the ruins scattered in every direction within these regions, fully demonstrate their former wealth and populousness, in those days of Syrian splendour, when the princes of the Phœnicians moored their fleets in every port of the discovered world: in countries, also, the existence of which, known only to themselves, they kept secret on account of the monopoly of commerce which thereby they enjoyed.

After several hours, imperial Tyre, the Venice of Asia, appeared at a distance rising out of the bosom of the sea. A long stretch of sandy beach brought us to its ruined aqueducts, and we encamped for the night on the ground where Alexander laid great blocks of stone, as foundations for the besieging works directed against the island city, which had so long resisted his arms.

July 28th.—The fate of Tyre was foretold by the prophets, and its accomplished destiny remains as a sign and proof of the unerring fate which overtook those places

denounced by the Almighty; yet there is no reason for saying that Tyre has fallen into complete decay. It is true that she is not, as of old, the centre of commerce and of civilization; her palaces and temples, too, are covered by the sands of the sea, and her pomp and magnificence have departed. But it is not accurate to describe this city as a place for the fisher to hang his nets upon; it is, on the contrary, a town of a moderate size, inhabited by many Greeks, as well as the Syrian, or native, population. There is an appearance of business, and a bustle, which certainly does not betoken stagnation and decay.

From Tyre we advanced along the coast towards Sidon, passing over the river Kas-mia, or, as it was anciently called, Leontes. The shore is covered with broken masses of building, prostrate columns, and, here and there, may be remarked a sarcophagus. The country is without any bold character, until Sidon or Saida is approached, where the great chain of Lebanon begins to show itself,

and imparts grandeur and sublimity to the scene.

One of the loveliest spots in Syria is to be found at a short distance from Tyre, on the Acre side, a small village, near some most ancient reservoirs, by some attributed to Solomon, and by others to Alexander. Be this as it may, they are filled by a beautiful stream, confined within grassy banks, covered with the finest gardens, and most luxuriant vegetation. The tanks are of stonework, which is, however, completely buried in masses of creepers.

After passing the Leontes, our route led us to a fountain called Ain el Kantara. Here we found a spreading fig-tree, under whose shadow we halted to bathe and breakfast. Near this spot are some excavations on the right of the road, evidently sepulchres, with staircases cut on the face of the cliff, exactly after the fashion of Petra. Little difference could be remarked in the structures, except the absence of all attempt at ornament; and, in general, the arrange-

ments of this miniature necropolis appeared similar to those of Edom.

We reached Sidon at sunset. It is surrounded by gardens, enclosed in hedges of cactus, with fountains shadowed over by pomegranates and vines. A castle, as old as the days of the crusades, but now converted into a barrack, crowns the hill above the city.

The large burial-ground was crowded with people, and rich in all the varieties of eastern costume. There were Bedouins, Albanians, Turks, and Greeks, smoking and drinking coffee, or playing at games of chance; the sunset pouring its golden light across the sea upon their rich dresses and picturesque figures, made a scene worthy of the pencil of Roberts.

As there was no place for our tent, we trudged for some distance along the sands, till at last a ruined mosque, built upon the shore by some pious Moslem, afforded us a place of refuge. Here there was no muezzin to break our slumber; no human creature approached us, and the only living

things we saw upon the shore were some half-famished dogs glutting themselves upon carrion.

July 29th.—From Saida to Beirout the road is as bad as possible; at first, rocky and broken, then terminating in an undulating plain of deep sand, across which no sooner is a track made than it is obliterated. The range of Lebanon on the right is studded with villages, and their picturesque sites, upon the highest pinnacles of rocks, or on the bosom of the mountain, peep through the surrounding verdure with singular effect. We were stopped outside the town by the quarantine officers, but luckily having a clean bill of health, were permitted to pursue our course across the deep sandy plain.

At last, we descried the sea, which had been lost sight of for some hours; and an English steamer, with two frigates, marked out the roadstead. Seeking a place to pitch our tents, we wandered about for some time, but at last were obliged to take up our position upon a mound adjacent to the burial-ground.

July 30th.—I rode up through innumerable gardens, filled with vines, figs, almond trees, mulberry, and prickly pears, to a point commanding a view of the bay, and facing the mountains of Lebanon. From here the country looks magnificent. Far as the eye can reach, it rests only upon dwellings spotted here and there amid the most luxuriant verdure, and the summits of Lebanon, with the sea washing its base, form the background of the landscape. The town itself is so near the water's edge, that it does not enter into the picture, nor is it required for effect, as it is by no means ornamental.

Returning to the tent, I heard a loud noise, and found, to my astonishment, Mahmoud and Salamé, my two servants, engaged in battle, one with a tent pole, the other brandishing a wooden mallet, and both were bellowing, like wild beasts, and foaming at the mouth. Before we could interfere, Mahmoud had four teeth knocked down his throat, and Salamé's finger was bitten through. With great difficulty, and by dint of the united strength of our whole party,

pulling each way and belabouring the combatants, we managed to separate them; but, as it was no longer safe to leave them together, I thought the best course was to apply to the consul, Mr. Moore, who sent two Janizaries, and the delinquents were conducted to the consulate. Mr. Moore said he would either settle the matter between them amicably, or send them both to prison.

July 31st.—We breakfasted with Colonel Rose, who had received us most kindly. The neighbourhood of Beirout is extremely populous. There are several Maronite families, driven from their mountain homes by the Druses, who have been obliged to take shelter here. They profess Christianity, while the Druses, on the other hand, are said to worship a calf, and perform other strange and mysterious ceremonies in their religious rites, with respect to which they maintain the deepest secrecy.

Some of the Maronite ladies are very beautiful, but all more or less dirty, from the highest to the lowest class. The married women wear the horn, a very sin-

gular and unsightly ornament, rising from the forehead, and supporting a long veil. It is very ponderous and often richly ornamented with precious stones and diamonds; at a distance it reminds the spectator of the Caucheois bonnet or cap. These ladies are extremely indolent, smoking all day long on their divans, where nargileh succeeds nargileh. They do not hide their faces from Franks, but conceal themselves from others who are not of their own people. Above all, however, the horn is most sacred, and must not be looked upon; so that it is impossible to make them take off the veil attached to the top of it. The huge fabric is fastened to the roots of the hair at the back of the head, and the superfluous tresses are used to maintain it in its place.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Princesses of the Lebanon — Natural Bridge at Nahr
Leban — Antiquities.



CHAPTER XXVII.

JULY 31st.—In the vicinity of our tent, a family of Maronites are established, who have been driven by the Druses from their property and possessions in Mount Lebanon. The father is closely related to the Emir Beschir, and all are descendants of the house of Schehab. The princess, his wife, is an old lady, extremely corpulent, and resembling some Chinese figures we are familiar with, as to her style of beauty. The horn upon her august brow is covered with gold and jewels. There are three daughters, all, of course, princesses, and good-looking, and the youngest is a child of eight years old.

The want of cleanliness, however, of these high-born dames, destroys all admiration. Those who, being married, wear the horn, *never* take it off; the consequence is, that, as the hinder fastenings of this heavy machine are extremely complicated, and twisted in amongst the hair to support its weight, the head becomes an accumulation of filth. They are not obliged by their religion, like the Mahometans, to wash repeatedly; the ceremony, therefore, is rarely performed. They all sleep in their clothes, and even the ponderous horn is worn all night.

The whole party, accompanied by their ladies of honour, some horned, but others, like the young princesses, without this mark, took up a position to-day under a tree, near our tent, and pursued their usual avocations of munching prickly pears, drinking coffee, and smoking nargilehs. The ladies consume about thirty of the latter per diem, and the maids of honour are constantly employed in filling and lighting them. The old princess sat in the centre of the circle, exalting her horn high above the rest, with her right

hand grasping the nargileh; the daughters sat around her, and outside were the court of attendants.

Sit (or Lady) Mariam, the little girl whom I have mentioned, entered the tent, and we gave her two handkerchiefs, which pleased her, and crammed her with cakes. Soon after, a messenger arrived in great form from the princess, to ask "the Emir" if he would receive her and her family. "The Emir," of course, consented. In a few minutes the whole party marched up, princesses, maids-of-honour, man-servants, and maid-servants, and took their places on various cushions and carpets. Luckily, just then Col. Rose paid us a visit; and he was very kind in assisting our conversation. After some time, our visitors retired with great form.

We afterwards repaired to the Emir Melkhem's, for the sake of returning the visit of the old princess. The house inhabited by these grandees is extremely small and, not particularly tidy; they dwelt in a palace before their misfortunes, but their present abode cannot boast of more than

five rooms. There is a large court-yard, where four or five horses were picketed, and about twenty male and female attendants were scattered about, engaged in various occupations, none of which, however, seemed to conduce to cleanliness.

We clambered up the broken stairs, and entered a small ante-room, where the court were at dinner, sitting round a large bowl with very mysterious contents, and we discreetly turned our eyes away while we passed through, that we might not interrupt their digestion. Through another chamber we arrived at a flight of steps leading to the roof, where we found the Emir Melkhem seated on a mat; and, while the coffee and pipes were in preparation, the ladies, having finished their mess, joined our party. The group was now very striking. The old Emir lay half reclining on the ground, with the setting sun gilding his grey beard, and forming a halo round his head. The princess was sublime in dignity, lifting her prodigious horn very high indeed. The two eldest girls, Sit Rowla and Sit Myse, looked extremely

handsome as they exhaled whole volumes of smoke and turned their languishing eyes upon the strangers. A dozen maids-of-honour, of all ages, were busy in the coffee and sherbet preparations, and the Lord Chamberlain, a very dirty looking old courtier, the chief of the harem, or principal guardian of the ladies, occupied a position near the door, at a respectful distance.

August 2nd.—Sit Mariam, who runs about the tents followed by two maids of honour with large horns, made her appearance while we were at dinner, and took her place at the table, where she imitated our eating with knives and forks; she also tried to emulate us so far as to drink some champagne, which she appears to like. In the middle of dinner she rose, and going to the sofa rolled herself into a ball, and in a few minutes was sound asleep. Soon afterwards, a servant came in, and taking the sleeping child gently in his arms, carried her off.

I have been told that the escape of this family from the attack of the Druses was almost miraculous. The old princess started,

bearing her horn, and accompanied by one maid of honour, upon donkeys. The three girls followed, one on a horse, without a bridle, that run away, luckily taking the right road; and the others on mules, one of which fell down, and the lady was, in consequence, so frightened that she could not recover herself, and was therefore carried on the shoulders of a trusty adherent for five miles across the rocks to a place of safety. As she is a remarkable specimen of the human race, weighing at least thirteen stone, the task must have been a laborious one. However, the conclusion was fortunate, for this princely family escaped with life and honour, although divested of their worldly goods.

Though the august horn of the princess was saved, many were cut off from the root by the merciless Druses, who tore them from the heads of the fugitives, or with their sabres cut the more than Gordian knots that bound them. If examined, there is something extremely romantic and interesting in

the histories of the mountain Princes, and were the Lebanon laid open to the searching eye and vivid fancy of another Scott, it would disclose many a tale of love and chivalry, of violence and crime.

The convents of the Christians have been the scenes, in some instances, of fearful atrocities, which it would be painful to dwell upon; and it is said that the darkest deeds of Italy and other European countries have been more than rivalled among the monasteries of these hills.

August 3rd.—To day I was writing a most eloquent appeal to the feelings of a friend in England, when there arose, outside the door of the tent, a strife of female tongues which announced the presence of the sex. At once, and without any notice, a brigade of horns entered the room, and invested the place. My courage deserted me, and when I saw not one but two royal horns leading the way and taking up a position upon the divan, I was fairly abashed, and, shouting for the dragoman,

made my best reverence to the assembled fair.

Another princess of the house of Schehab had made her appearance for the purpose of paying a visit to the first Highness, and the two courts together had then determined to make a descent upon our establishment, and to have a look at the strangers. The new lady was not handsome, but magnificently dressed; her horn eclipsed the original one, and she wore it with immense dignity. It was a fine sight to observe the illustrious rivals, shaking their horns at each other, and smoking their nargilehs with royal grace.

The new-comer was the wife of an Emir, who is to be Prince of the Mountain, unless the Porte succeed in maintaining a Mussulman against a Christian chief. The first question she proposed had reference to her husband's prospects, but I told her that she must ask the Consul-General, for that I was not a political character. They chattered a great deal among themselves, so that there was time to survey the beauties at leisure.

One of the ladies of honour to the Queen-expectant of the Mountain, had eyes of extraordinary size and lustre; moreover she had stained the corners of them with antimony, which increased their brilliancy. After surveying the group for some time, I made an excuse, to escape, and at last the majestic group, having coffee'd, and piped, and sherbeted themselves to their hearts' content, retired.

August 4th.—Anxious to visit what is called a natural bridge, at Nahr Leban, near Fakra, we took the road into the mountains, with which our servants declared they were acquainted. However, finding that, after some hours, we were still proceeding by the sea side, and entertaining suspicions that we were upon a wrong track, I determined to turn back. After retrograding as far as Djouni, we reached a village called Zouk, near the Nahr el Kelb or Dog River, where we were obliged to pass the night.

The scenery we travelled over was varied and lovely; every hill top can boast of its

convent, generally most picturesquely placed, and sometimes stretching its buildings down the side of the rock, encircled by gardens, or connected with the valley beneath by terraces, which look like giant flights of steps. These are all covered with fruit trees and innumerable shrubs, but as not one amongst them grows to any great size, the grey crags peep out from the verdure, near the tops; a thicker covering of foliage clothes the lower valleys, and at the foot of Lebanon extends the wide expanse of sea. The villages are scattered among the hills, which appear cultivated from their bases to the summits. The religious edifices seem innumerable; the Maronites being, I believe, the most numerous community, but there are many other sects in addition to the Druses.

August 5th.—Daybreak saw us on the move, and we turned directly into the mountains. The first ascent was almost perpendicular; the tracks frightfully bad, though round us on all sides appeared gardens full of vines, figs, and grapes; and

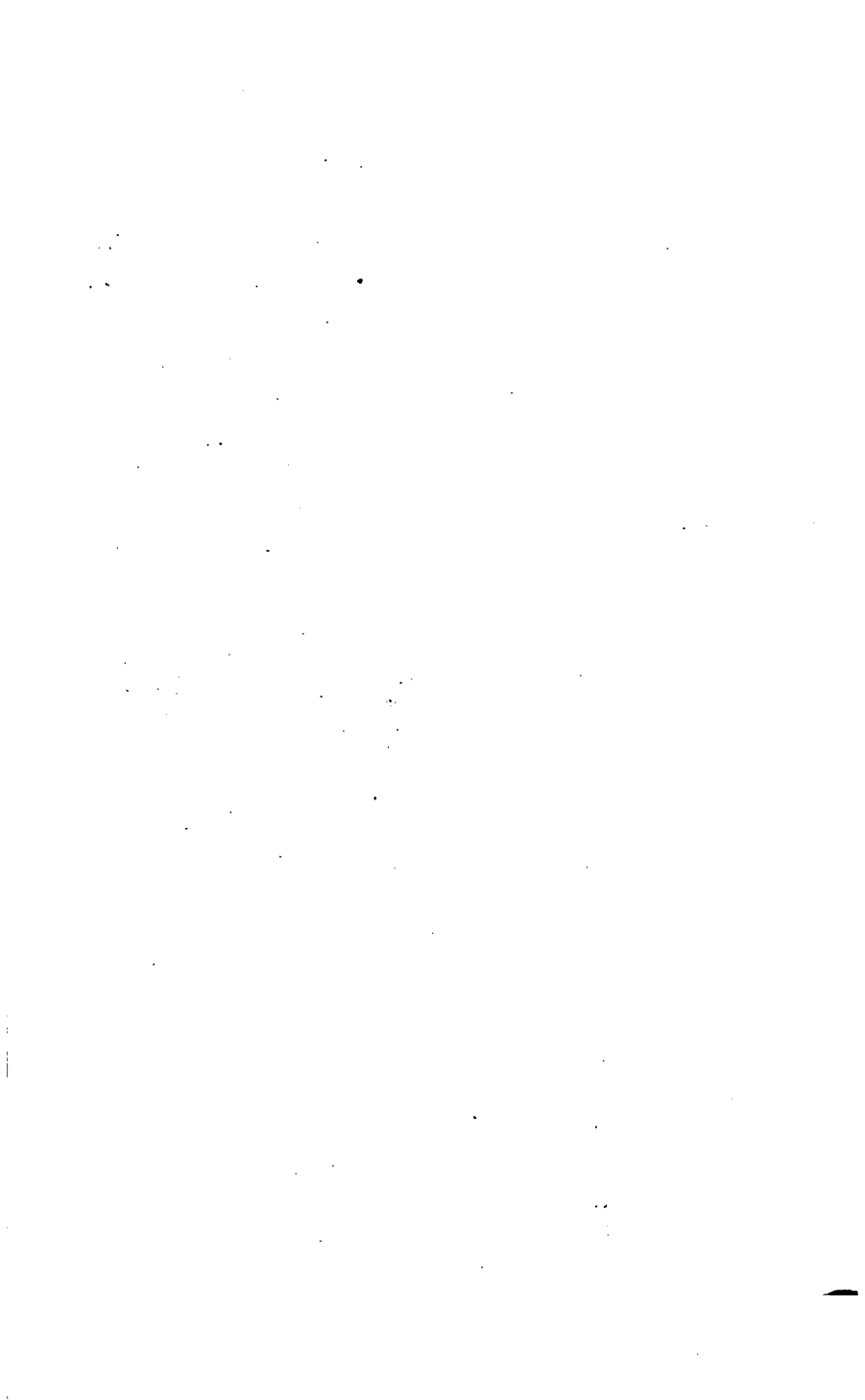
terraces extend over all the hills. Such Palestine once was, and no better idea can be formed of the desolation that has befallen her than is to be obtained by comparing her deserted plains with the smiling and well cultivated valleys of Lebanon.

Proceeding onwards, we beheld many a convent, perched like an eagle's nest, upon a crag, and the scenery resembles the fastnesses of the Rhine; but instead of the winding river, there is here the wide ocean. We ascended into a stony region, where the rocks are split into innumerable shapes; columns, pinnacles, and towers, rise before the traveller, who might fancy he was looking over ruined cities. Yet even here there is cultivation; corn grows among the crags in every sheltered spot, and trees are shooting out of the crevices of the rock. The temperature is considerably cooler than below, resembling much that of our own country; and in the more elevated district the harvest seems to be contemporaneous with our own.

We reached a village where the murmur of

the silk wheel was heard in every direction. The people almost universally are civil and kind; far different from the Arabs. Nearly every one salutes the stranger on passing, and though there is the same trouble, delay, and circumlocution with them as with all the Easterns, they have gentler and more friendly manners.

We desired to find the Nahr Leban, or Milk River, over which the famous bridge extends. Strange to say, we were at first foiled in our search, and balked in every effort at inquiry. Some did not know—others alleged it was here, and there, and everywhere; at last, in a village called Miraba, we obtained a guide. Another hour brought us to Fareya, where we turned into a romantic valley, wherein a streamlet leaping from crag to crag in innumerable cascades was shining in the sun. Up this glen, toiling over a long ascent, we attained the top of the mountain, left our guide, mules, and baggage, and determined to seek for ourselves, knowing the object could not be far off.





of Adams, 1843

NATURAL RIDGE, MOUNT LEBANON.

London, HENCKS Collection, 1847

of Rock

After wandering through fields of corn and other crops, some peasants informed us that the "El Hadjar" (rock, I believe) was at no great distance. We had seen the two sources of the river from the valley below; one rushing through the glen we had ascended, the other throwing itself over a high wall of rock further down. It was this branch we were seeking, and at last at sunset we found the bridge.

It is, indeed, one of the wonders of the world—a solid wall of rock cut through into the proportions and span of an arch of about eighty feet, the highest part being about a hundred and twenty feet above the stream. This appears like a vast chasm, which may have been worn away by snows and winter torrents into the shape it bears. But the immense thickness of the rock, and the gigantic proportions of the solid mass render it very difficult to suppose that art has not assisted nature. If entirely accidental, it is one of the most extraordinary formations in any country.

The stream Nahr Leban flows at this

season gently through the rocks beneath, where its silver stream glides quietly away; but the winter snows must arm it with prodigious power, and the force of the torrent must be tremendous. It is well worth the stranger's visit, even though he should pursue a devious course, and it will be the cause of his passing through many places and scenes among the hills which very few travellers have explored.

August 6th.—This morning I examined attentively both sides of the bridge, looking carefully for any marks of the chisel, but found none. Below the arch, enormous masses of stone are heaped confusedly together, as if they had fallen in at some great convulsion, while under our feet lies the valley, where the waters as they fall expand into a natural basin, the half circle of which on one side of the bridge resembles a theatre, and is similar to the formation which probably enabled the architect to excavate the one at Petra.

Higher up the mountain we found the source of the stream, at the spot where it

bursts from the heart of the hill, a tiny rill of the freshest and coldest water, increasing as it descends through a pebbly channel, till at last, arriving at a ledge of rock which the stream has perforated, it falls through the crevice into a lower basin, forming a series of waterfalls, overshadowed by creepers and rhododendrons, (which seem the weed of the country, as the oleander is at Petra,) and surrounded by turf of the freshest and brightest green. Hence the river takes a sinuous course for about two hundred yards, until it meets the huge barrier of rock, and passing through this enormous opening, rushes rapidly downwards till it encounters another ledge, over which the river rushes with a sheet of foam, and forms an immense cascade, visible from a great distance in the valley below.

The water here begins to be manageable, and the people of the country, who understand irrigation exceedingly well, direct it into innumerable channels through the sides of the hills, conducting it to the terraced fields, which they can deluge at pleasure

in every direction. This abundant supply is the secret of the great fertility of the Lebanon. I have described one stream, but in these hills there are thousands, though not so peculiar in their course.

The vegetation in the hollows is perfectly marvellous. Plane trees and walnuts, oak, and fir, rejoice in the fatness of an exuberant soil, and the heights appear cultivated to the very summit, on which are to be seen numerous herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats.

Another valley contains some ruins near a village called Fakra, placed at the summit of a singular ridge of rock, rising above the cultivated ground. Commanding a magnificent view of two ravines, stand the vestiges of a building resembling a ruined pyramid. The interior structure is also very similar, for there is a chamber in the heart of the edifice, the entrance to which appears to have been concealed with great care, and a groove still remains in each side of the wall, where the door was once placed. The entrance cannot be observed until the ex-

plorer ascends a flight of stairs on the right of the building, and penetrates a narrow passage, in the centre of which, the doorway is to be found. This has evidently been broken into, and with no small labour, for the stonework is of prodigious thickness. There is a Greek inscription remaining on a corner stone of the edifice, and the structure appears to have been originally cased with some other material.

About five hundred yards below this temple, are the ruins of another, and, apparently, larger fabric. Remains of columns and their pedestals encumber the doorway of the pile; but this, also, like its companion, is a mere mass of ruins, which appear of the same date and style as the inferior Ptolemaic temples of Egypt.

Returning to our tent, near the bridge of Nahr Leban, we started for the village of Akoura, expecting to reach it before sunset. The road led almost perpendicularly up the crags on the opposite side of the valley. When we reached the top, the wide expanse of ocean lay before us, and a deep and

broad defile terminated at the shore. On each side of it, the hills were literally piled one above another,—not rising in ranges, like the Scotch or Welch mountains, but forming vast tracks of land, intersected by broad and fertile vales covered with the richest fruits and crops, and generally wooded to the summit. And here, far away upon the waters, we saw a speck of smoke, and with a glass made out an English steamer on her way, probably to Tripoli, which afterwards proved to be the Vesuvius.

Wishing to reach Akoura, which we distinguished far beneath us, we heard from our guide that there were two villages of the Metouali on the track, so that, if we arrived late, our horses could still get barley on the road. We rode on, therefore, through a succession of matchless scenery, towards a descent which led us, gently sloping down, to a small hamlet, where the people were employed at their harvest, the women sitting under the trees and the children basking in the sun. There is something prepossessing in all the inhabitants we have seen. They





VIEW IN MOUNT LEBANON.

London: Bury & Myers, 1847.

never gather round like the Arabs—never ask for backshish; they saluted us in a friendly manner as we passed, and are civil and courteous in their bearing. But the ladies are wild and frightened, and generally avoid strangers, if possible, unless sufficient confidence is inspired to allow of an approach within a few yards, and then, as their alarm subsides, they begin to be a little more familiar.

There appeared before us a precipitous cliff, with a vast cavern near the centre, and a silvery stream of water stealing out of it, through succeeding ledges of rock and piles of huge stones, till it formed a waterfall, below which there was a bridge. Near it was a ruined temple, probably of the same age as Fakra, and a grove of magnificent walnut-trees. A wide valley received the stream, the course of which might be traced as far as the eye could reach.

I remember no scene that combines grandeur and grace, form and colouring, position and harmony, so entirely as this. The principal features are, a pile of ruins, an enormous

cliff, a cavern of immense size, a mountain stream, bounding from crag to crag and fall to fall; three beautiful cascades, leaping headlong into deep clear pools, a romantic bridge, a deep and winding valley, and a range of precipitous hills.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Village of Akoura — Hosrun — Cedars of Lebanon —
Base of Mount Lebanon — Baalbec — Quarries —
Zebdeni — Suburb of Damascus.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

AUGUST 7th.—Our guide, who was to go to Akoura, desired to take his leave, saying, that he understands there is danger of the plague. At the village the inhabitants had not heard of this, and were, it seems, rather more afraid of us, as coming from Beirout, than they would have been had we arrived from Akoura. The plague is said to exist in the vicinity of the cedars, which we heard before leaving Beirout; and, moreover, the convent at Kanobin was reported to be unsafe.

August 8th.—About a mile brought us

to the village of Meneitere, where the whole population, male and female, turned out to inspect us; and, according to their account, every one in the place was ill. I could not, however, see any signs of sickness. With great difficulty we escaped their importunities, and pursued our course to Akoura. This village stands upon the edge of a stream, flowing out of a chasm in the mountain, and under a small arch, similar to that of Nahr Leban in miniature. We remarked here some very tall poplars, and the sides of the hills were covered with walnut-trees. The cultivation continues, and the luxuriance of the figs and vines, mixed with fine crops of corn, is universal.

At this place we could not obtain a guide; no one would move; money would not tempt; civility failed, and threats were unavailing. At last, we fairly forced a sulky-looking fellow into doing what he did not like, and pursued our way up the mountain. The scenery soon began to assume a wilder character. We left the farms and vineyards, trees and gardens, far behind, and entered

upon a rocky district, intersected with rivulets and scanty patches of verdure, composed of the freshest and most beautiful turf.

The top of the ridge was attained about sunset; and here we saw the sea far away below us, and the plains of Tripoli; the distant peaks of the mountains were red with light; and we could just distinguish the line of surf that beat against the shore. An encampment of Bedouins was immediately below us, marked by their black tents and scattered flocks of sheep and goats. These, however, were quiet people, very different from our desert friends.

Halting close to them, we obtained milk and a sheep, which were very acceptable, for we had found no fresh provisions since we left Beirout. As night came on, the air became intensely cold, our actual elevation above the sea being very great; and here the water was like melted snow. The scenery is rugged and bold; a few stunted junipers, springing from the crags, small patches of pasture, with huge grey stones piled around, forming the prospect.

In spite of the cold we slept, and, soon after daybreak, started for Mount Lebanon, by which name the whole range is called; but still the mountain of the cedars is peculiarly designated as Gebel Leban. The country continued bleak and wild. The sea and the plains lay stretched out like a map under our feet, and we passed over precipices that made the head dizzy.

We arrived at some cultivation about mid-day, and here we were again told that the plague was at Bischerre, and also near the Cedars. However, we took another guide as far as the village of Hosrun, situated on a point of rock which rises abruptly in the midst of a deep ravine. Here we bought some fruit from the natives, who were satisfied with a few piastres.

Soon after leaving the village, the track led up the side of a precipice, where so narrow was the footing, it was apparently miraculous that our animals held their way. But this did not last long, some large rocks presented themselves, and, with great difficulty and the delay of unloading the baggage, we

had nearly got safe through them, when, of a sudden, one of the mules fell backwards over the path, and baggage and all rolled over about forty yards down the cliff—very fortunately our bedding was on the back of the poor beast, and this protection saved its life.

On coming up we expected to find the creature dashed to pieces, but a large stone had prevented its progress to the bottom of a ravine five or six hundred feet deep. As it was, the animal escaped with some severe cuts, but was quite disabled from carrying anything.

On rating the guide for bringing us an impassable road, his excuse was, that the priest of the last village had told him to take the track along which he was leading us. Upon this a peasant, who was near, said the real reason was, that the priest's corn was standing near the other road, and as it was not cut, he was afraid our mules would eat it, and therefore sent us by the bad pass.

We saw the Cedars afar off, looking like a small round speck, or clump, upon the sur-

face of the mountain. Almost all day they were in view, till gradually they were developed, and their shapes and stately figures appeared more clearly before us. It is singular to behold this spot, small in extent and quite isolated, covered with these magnificent trees. The hills are bare all round them, nor is there any deviation from the line of demarcation, by which they seem bounded.

About six o'clock we found ourselves among their giant stems. A peculiar stillness reigns all over the spot. The breeze does not seem to stir the branches, which appear almost motionless. By the roots of an enormous patriarch of the grove, we have pitched our tent, and are preparing for rest, after a long and hard day's journey.

August 9th.—There are about two hundred and fifty trees in all, occupying a knoll, which, taking the irregularities of surface into account, covers about six or seven acres. There are one or two stragglers, but at no great distance from the clump, and these do not break the line of demarcation I have before

alluded to. The Lebanon range here is bleak and bare, and there is no cultivation higher than the cedars, nor are there any trees visible, except these princes of the mountain, eternal Emirs whom no change of dynasty, no worldly events can affect. They own no sultan except the Omnipotent, who bade them grow and flourish upon the spot that he appointed. They owe no thanks to man, for man defaces and destroys them in his wantonness. They scatter their seeds to the winds of heaven, which under Almighty Providence bear them harmless to some favourable spot, where other scions rising under the giant branches of the elder ones, perpetuate the race of the trees of Jehovah. They seem everlasting memorials of the greatness of God's earthly temple; types also of that heavenly abode where the Omnipotent dwells in majesty and power; and they speak to all who see them, in the still whisper that murmurs among their branches when the morning breeze kisses their green tops.

“Come and behold us, you that travel from all lands, from the ends of the earth,

and the uttermost part of the sea. We are here in our appointed place, on the breast of the mountain, where our sires before us have dwelt, even from the beginning of the world. Our brethren and our friends, our relations and our kindred, our fathers and our ancestors, as well as our children and our grand-children, have perished and perish around us, and we are but a remnant of the chosen ones; but we still live on the same spot, where our forefathers flourished and were cut off or decayed in God's own time. Our name is abroad in all lands, but our home is here.

“Look at the bold and broad outline of Lebanon, gaze on the expanding summits from the clefts where the snow lies in its eternal wreath, to the spots where the water gushes forth, and then follow the bright streamlet down to the land of the vine and the fig, the harvest and the homestead, and remember that all this was covered with the shadow of our forefathers' branches; like God's own people, we were powerful and mighty in the land; like them our numbers are rooted up

and cut down—our glory has departed, our might is broken, and we are trampled under foot; but a few yet remain to bear witness to the truth, still lingering upon the sacred territory of our fathers, still separated from all contact with other children of the Creator; for, lo! no tree groweth, no grass flourisheth, no crop is sown, no harvest is reaped near our branches. We are set apart; look at us from afar off, we are cut off from the rest of nature; yet we are only fulfilling our appointed task, set by Jehovah as a mark upon the land out of the lap of which arose the materials of his earthly temple. Stranger! whoever thou art, gaze upon us, and remember that we are the trees of God; think upon all these things, commune with thy spirit, and be at peace.”

Such were the thoughts of those who sat under the gnarled branches of these mighty chiefs of the forest of fallen Lebanon. How glorious is this their throne, embosomed in the snow-crowned mountain, and set like a bright emerald upon a golden plain; for the hills, radiant in sun-light, encircle the one

peculiar spot; while far below, in the rocky ravines and craggy precipices, the face of nature smiles with luxuriance. The convent towers and cheerful villages are scattered among the cliffs and crags. The ripe harvest is gathered in, plenteousness covers the land, and it would seem as if the baneful crescent had no influence over it, so fair is the prospect and so bright the scene; all, moreover, is upon an extensive scale. The mountains, very different from the spires and pinnacles of Sinai, are bold and bluff, stretching away into broad declivities and sheltered vales, which again decrease into precipitous ravines till they reach the plain, and terminate upon the broad ocean.

The tread of some horses resounded through the grove, and we soon after descried four English blue-jackets wending their way towards our tent. On hailing them, we found they were some officers of the Vesuvius, who had come to Tripoli from Beirout, and had taken this opportunity of visiting the Cedars. They had heard that there was a convent there, and, trusting to this chance, had

brought no provisions. It is true that there is a small chapel in progress, but as yet the walls are not half finished. We asked them to share our stock of food, which turned out to be two tough chickens, and a few eggs and coffee.

Some of the trees bear the names upon their bark of Laborde, Burchardt, and Lamartine, with several others. The cedar of Lamartine was measured, and we found it to be above twenty-four feet in girth. There are not above seven or eight of these magnates, but a goodly supply of smaller ones surrounds them, and there seems no chance at present of the race dying away or being destroyed.

Bidding adieu to our friends of the Vesuvius, we started for Baalbec, taking a long and laborious ascent which brought us to the summit of Lebanon, from whence we looked down on one side upon the ridge of Anti-Lebanon and the vast plain of Baalbec; and, on the other, upon the far cedars and the valleys and plains extending to Tripoli and the sea. Around us were large patches

of snow, which at this altitude resist the influence of the sun, and are never dissolved. A rugged pass led us through a ruined town, where there are some excavations and beautiful waterfalls. Near the base of Mount Lebanon we entered a long range of wooded hills which separate it from the plain. At the commencement of this region, a plenteous stream of water gushes out of the rock with the force of a torrent.

Continuing our course over an immense plain, we began to distinguish the outlines of the great temple of Baalbec. We had seen the spot before from the summit of the mountain; but now gradually the six large columns detached themselves upon the landscape, and every moment that we advanced they appeared more and more majestic. A single column standing in the centre of the plain, seems about sixty feet in height, with a Corinthian capital and a broad base of five steps. It was, probably, a trophy, or perhaps a landmark, and is situated exactly opposite the great temple.

August 10th.—We rose with the sun, and gazed with admiration at the Corinthian columns, which stand isolated in their glory, rendering Baalbec conspicuous from every point whence the eye can reach it. In the same point of view, from the door of our tent, other columns appeared, forming part of the smaller temple, which was originally surrounded by a colonnade.

Before examining the ruins we were desirous of entering the quarries, from whence the large blocks of stone were taken for the walls, roof, and foundations of these buildings.

An immense mass of rock is to be seen here, hewn into form, but left in the state in which the workmen had placed it previously to its being brought down from the hill to the temple. This enormous stone is, perhaps, more extraordinary than the obelisk in the quarries of Assouan, but each bears testimony to the immense power employed in those days upon any great work, and puzzles the stranger with conjectures as to how that power could be efficiently wielded for completing

the intentions of the builders. That these masses were cut and transported by the Romans is doubtful, such mechanical skill belonging to an earlier period of taste.

Returning from the quarries, we passed the day near the great temple, and its smaller but beautiful rival. It is needless to enter upon a description of these celebrated ruins, which are so well known, and have been so often described. I can add nothing to the tributes that have been paid to their magnificence, except the testimony of one fresh from all the wonders of Egypt and the fairy beauties of Petra, who, nevertheless, was amazed and enchanted by the splendour of Baalbec. Here the traveller finds all the vastness of conception and execution belonging to the Egyptian school, ornamented by the richest and most elaborate sculpture of a later age.

Nothing can surpass the friezes and cornices of the smaller temple. The door of entrance, as a piece of workmanship, excels all that even imperial Rome can boast of. The whole area of these edifices is covered

with prostrate columns and their capitals. The stone is very hard, and the cutting as fine as it is possible to conceive. But, wherever the eye wanders among these ruins, it involuntarily turns to the magnificent Sextuor, which rises like the personification of strength and beauty, as if it stood there to be worshipped as the deity of the place.

But it is painful to behold the destruction that time and man have worked. Many are the changes which the temples have undergone since they were sacred to the idols of Baal; for Baalbec has been turned into a fortress, and bastions and batteries have been erected among her colonnades and porticoes. These again are gone, and with them a mosque which had been built in the midst of the walls; but many a fragment on which the richest sculpture is portrayed, is recognised amidst the rough execution of modern Vandals, who broke down pillar and capital, frieze and bas-relief, to construct a wretched mosque, and make a fortification that was useless.

I do not pretend to guess at the history

of Baalbec. But it is clear that its foundations and origin are of the earliest date. How far, and at what time, the Roman brought his taste and skill to bear upon what he discovered here, I know not; but the temples would appear cotemporaneous with, or very little younger than, Karnac and Luxor; all, however, is lost in mystery, for the traces of their history cannot be followed out, and the confusion that prevails among all the remnants of these mighty edifices renders it impossible even to guess at the chain of vicissitudes which reduced them to their present state.

It is doubtful whether there is anything in the world, taking it as a whole, more imposing than the colonnade of Baalbec, with the six pillars rising opposite to it. It is true that the gigantic proportions and extent of Karnac, are wanting, but Karnac, on the other hand, is without the elaborate sculptures and ornament of Baalbec.

There is a small circular temple, or, more probably, a tomb, near a fountain, almost covered by a weeping willow. We saw also

a building, with granite columns, containing a sarcophagus, but they were all in ruins.

Leaving Baalbec, we crossed the range of Anti-Lebanon, through a bleak and most uninteresting country, as far as a village called Neby Schirt, where we were beset by troops of dogs, and a host of idlers as usual came up to reconnoitre us. We asked for water, they pretended not to know where it was to be procured, and the old story of parleying and scheming, began before any one would venture on such an errand.

At last, we succeeded in buying our supply from a wretched cottage, but it would appear incredible to those who have not tried it, that travellers should wait an hour before they can persuade the inhabitants that they want, and will pay for, water, and at last are allowed to get it, apparently as a favour.

August 11th.—This morning, a hilly country, covered with scanty brushwood, ushered us into Zebdeni, a village near the source of the Barrada or Phorphar. Here

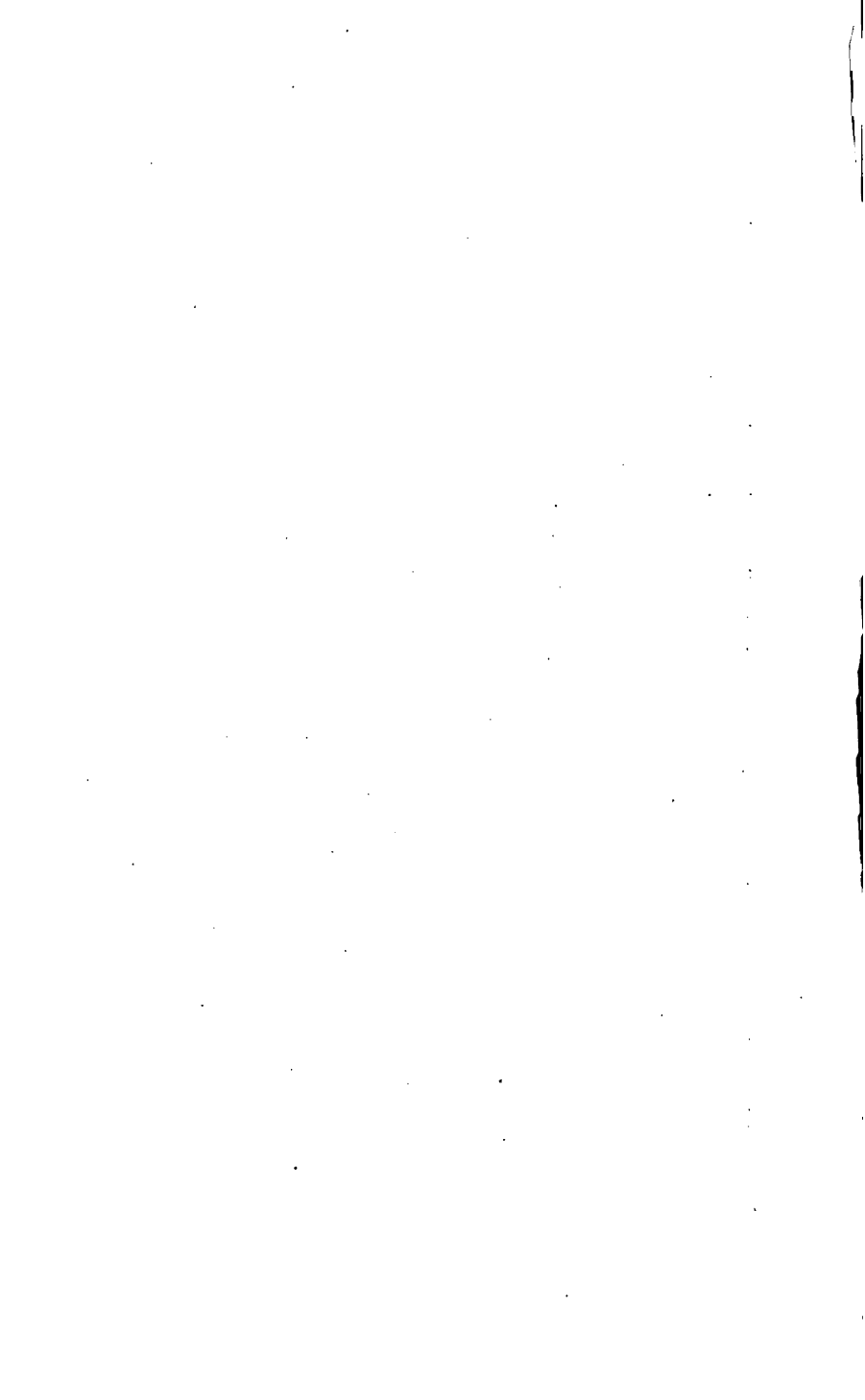
an abundance of water gushes from the hills, and the fertility and luxuriance of the soil is wonderful. Zebdeni is said to be a miniature Damascus as to its peculiar verdure and bright waters. Passing through part of the gardens, but leaving the village on the right, we soon reached the banks of the Barrada, and followed the river for some hours. Village after village, rich gardens, and orchards, succeeded each other, and the little stream rushes through the valley with headlong rapidity, its bed and margin alone being green, while the hills it passes through are naked and bare.

As we approached the famous city, the signs of population increased round our path. Caravans of mules and donkeys, camels and horses, Bedouins from the deserts beyond Palmyra, and from the neighbourhood of Homs and Aleppo, Turkish soldiers, and Syrian peasantry, thronged the road in every variety of colour and costume. But the sun was setting fast, and though we pushed on our jaded and lame horses, we

did not arrive at Damascus until he had disappeared.

We passed through a narrow chasm in the rock, almost resembling a gateway, and in a few minutes the celebrated capital was before us. We could barely distinguish the dark mass of foliage which surrounds it, and the distant lights glimmered and were reflected in the waters. But we were still a mile from Salahieh, a suburb which, as being cooler than the town, we had selected beforehand as our halting place.

When we sought for a place to pitch the tent, there was none to be found; the ground was rocky and the pins would not enter. Into a ruined mosque, after an hour's fruitless toil in search of a resting-place, we carried our baggage, and servants, mules, and horses, all bivouacked together. We laid our carpets on the only spot where there was a partial remnant of roof; and before us was a tomb of some Damascene grandee, who little thought of the infidels resting near his grave.



CHAPTER XXIX.

Damascus — The Consul's House — Bazaars — Damascus under the Sultan—Souk Burradu.



CHAPTER XXIX.

AUGUST 12th.—The sun was rising over the city as we turned out to see his first beams spread over mosque and cupola. The sight was magnificent. There is nothing like this view in the whole world. I do not mean that it is more beautiful, but the singularity of the position of the desert-girt metropolis is its greatest charm. Situated in an immense plain, it rises out of a forest of trees, which stretch all around wherever the waters flow. The most conspicuous object is the great mosque, which was originally the church of St. John, but there are minarets and domes in every direction.

It was now time to look for quarters;

entering Salahieh, therefore, we inquired for a garden where we might encamp, and very luckily found a Greek, who received us with open arms, and conducted us to his abode. Our tent was placed in the garden of which he had the care, belonging, I believe, to Scheriff Pacha. We are shaded by huge walnut-trees and weeping-willows, and lulled by the sound of falling water. We have magnificent fruit to tempt us, and our tent is strewn with grapes, melons, and figs.

The city itself, though clean in comparison with most other Eastern towns I have seen, is not, in point of beauty or picturesque features, to be compared with Cairo. There are no latticed windows overhanging the street—no long and dark vistas of houses, with roofs apparently touching and excluding the straggling sunbeams. Here, the streets are broader, and the whole aspect of things, though far less beautiful, displays, perhaps, more comfort.

The house of Mr. Wood, the Consul, is entered by a large court-yard, containing a reservoir or fountain. Round this, are trel-

lised vines and creepers, with masses of flowers and huge rose-bushes. The walls are painted, and covered with carved ornaments of woodwork and stone. There are several rooms, and each seems more beautiful than the last.

Mr. Wood sent his Janizaries with us, and under their protection we strolled through the bazaars, which are extensive, and far more remarkable than those of Cairo, both from their size and the goods displayed. Here all is perfectly Oriental; a Frank is rarely to be seen, and the Turks, more fanatical than in any other of their cities, scarcely conceal their hatred and disgust of every European. So much is this the case, that Mr. Wood was fearful that we might get into scrapes, or be insulted. However, nothing disagreeable occurred, though we were pushed against and hustled by both soldiers and citizens. Subsequently we mounted the roof of a shop to obtain a view of the great mosque, but it is not to be compared to that of Sultan Hassan at Cairo.

August 14th.—There seems little variety, and not much worth seeing in Damascus. Two days will suffice for the visit as well as a year. My thoughts are far away, for this being the last stage of our wandering, we are longing once more to be at home. With these sensations, everything becomes tasteless. Even the wonders of Baalbec failed to produce the feelings which, when first we started on our journey, the temples of Egypt had excited. No wonder, then, that Damascus becomes insipid, and holds out no inducement to the weary and home-sick to prolong their stay there.

Unlike Cairo, where every street is a picture, the interior portions of the town have nothing to recommend them, except the striking costumes of the inhabitants, and perhaps a greater degree of cleanliness. Yet here there are the same filthy and pestilential heaps of filth, decayed and putrid fruit and offal; while from beneath the stranger's foot starts up a mangy dog who has been gorging himself till he can hardly growl; or some yelping puppies with their snarling

mother quarrel for scraps and half-rotten bones.

The bazaars are tenanted by lazy and impudent shopkeepers, who, because Damascus is considered a holy city, and that only for the last few years Franks have been tolerated there, treat them with contempt, and think it a favour to allow them to purchase. This was not so in Mehemet Ali's day. When the Egyptians were masters of Damascus, every European had not only toleration but protection, and the people of the town were obliged to keep terms with the despised stranger. Now fanaticism has kindled its torch once more, and as the policy of the Porte has been weak enough to allow, if not to encourage, this regenerated animosity, the Ulemas, or heads of sects and tribes in Damascus, by every means in their power, daily instil into the people that they cannot hate or deride us too much.

This would appear extraordinary after all that England did for the Turks in Syria; but the latter declare, and with some colour of justice, that England was paid, and well

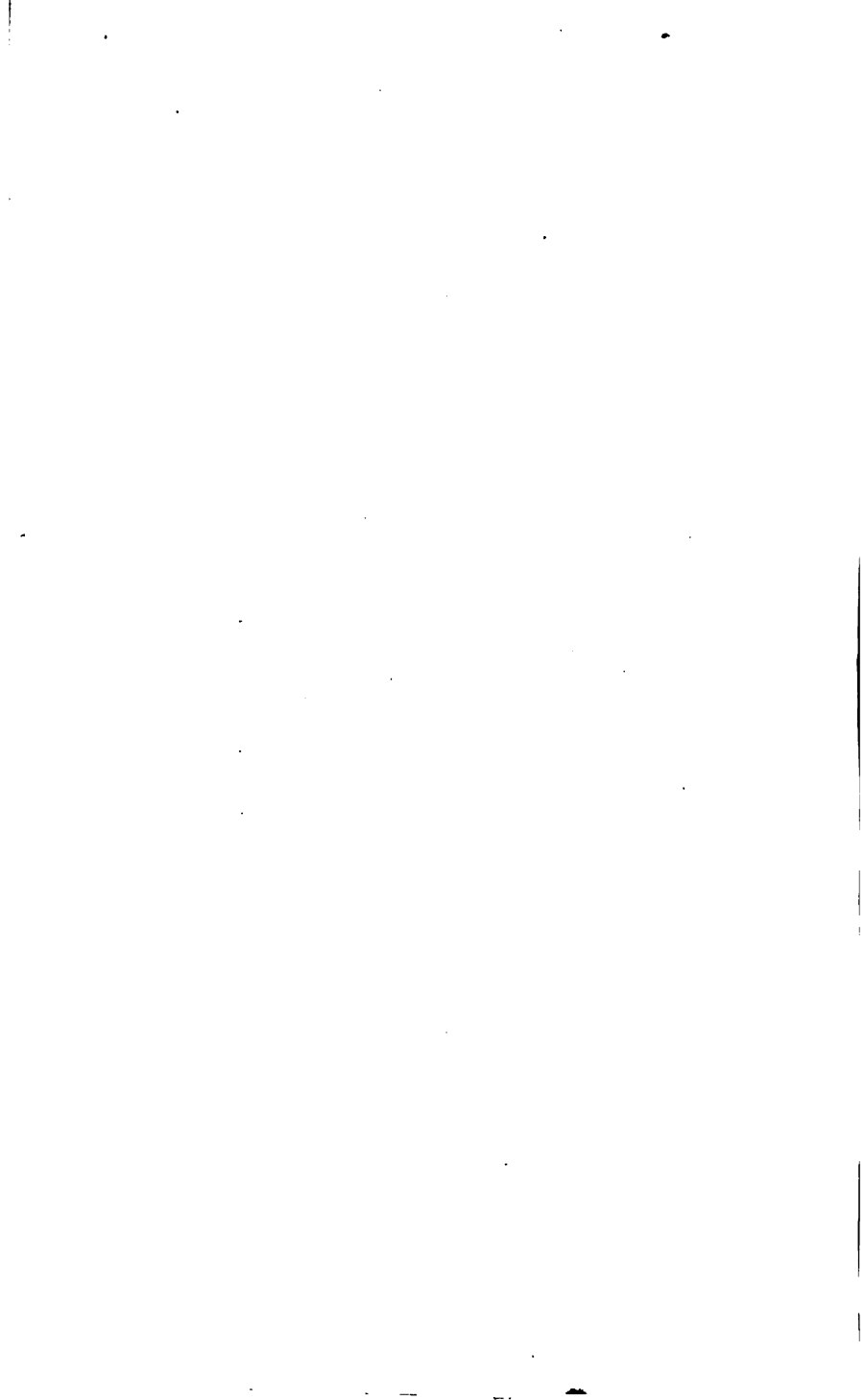
paid, for the work upon which the Sultan employed her, and that the decorations and diamonds, the muskets and ammunition, for which they are to reimburse England, are a perfect set-off against any exertion of ours. In short, we are represented to the lower classes as hired auxiliaries, too happy to do the Sultan's will if we are paid for it. Nothing is so lamentable as the gross and barbarous ignorance prevailing here. The people are actually told that the Sultan appoints the King of England, and that he is the slave and servant of the Porte!

August 16th.—For the first time, I feel that we are moving towards home—for the first time, I have started with the certainty that every step of my horse, by the will of Providence, will bring me nearer to the term of my pilgrimage. Though miles of sea, and hours of quarantine, and a long journey intervene, still it is a source of joy to reflect that our wanderings are over, and our travel accomplished.

Passing through the bazaars, and taking our last look at the gay groups that thronged

them, we arrived once more at Salahieh, and the ruined mosque which had been our lodging for the first night. We passed again the cleft or chasm, through which we looked back upon the fair plain, and its countless minarets, and then without a sigh turned our backs upon it for the last time.

The same route led us to a village called Souk Barrada. We slept among some rocks; the servants, I verily believe, were huddled in an old sarcophagus near the fountain where we pitched our tent. The scenery of this district is lively and varied, while the Phaphar, with its green border and cheerful villages, is doubly beautiful, because it is so unusual in these countries to travel near a clear stream.



CHAPTER XXX.

Zahle — Mar Elias — Beirout — Alexandria — Mehemet
Ali — Malta — Gibraltar — Corunna — Ferrol —
Portsmouth.

THE
MIDDLE
CLASS
IN
THE
NINETEENTH
CENTURY

CHAPTER XXX.

AUGUST 17th.—Near Souk Barrada, at a pass where a bridge is thrown across the river, two Roman inscriptions appear upon the rock, in good preservation, stating that the cutting had been made by the Emperor Antoninus. There are also excavations here, and tombs, some of which we explored, and afterwards continued our course up the Pharphar, leaving Zebdeni and our old road on the right. Gebel Sheikh or Mount Hermon, is here a conspicuous object, while the traveller passes through the valley of the Horn and the valley of Silk—two ravines which are rocky and uncultivated.

We left the Anti-Lebanon range, entering upon the plains of Bekaa, near a village called Midgel, where the whole range of Lebanon extended before us. Far away to the right, were the patches of snow on the peaks above the cedars; below us was the distant temple of Baalbec, and before us, nestling in a valley at the base of Lebanon, lay the town of Zahle, at which we arrived at night-fall. The people here are mostly Christians, and were very hospitable to us. A Turkish Bey was quartered in the town with some troops, and we heard grievous accounts of his proceedings against the helpless population.

Zahle is the largest town in Lebanon, and though in appearance thriving and wealthy, is far from being so. The river winds through the valley, fringed with masses of foliage, in which tall and stately poplars predominate.

August 18th.—From Zahle, we once more ascended Mount Lebanon. Here, again, convents crown the summits of the hills; broad valleys stretch away to the sea on the one

hand, while on the other, the Bekaa looks like a second ocean, and innumerable streamlets burst out of the rocks, and leave along their track the freshest verdure.

About mid-day, we came to a village in the very heart of Lebanon, where, under a few aged trees, the mountaineers hold their parliaments and councils, when called together by their chiefs. This is a favourite rendezvous for the various tribes and clans. After resting here, we continued our route to Mar Elias, a Greek convent, situated in a vast basin, formed by some precipitous crags. The Superior gave us food and wine; after which, we resumed our journey to Ain Berde, where we had determined to encamp, preferring the cool mountain breeze to the heat of Beirout. Instead, however, of being three hours distance from Mar Elias, as we had been told, this place was at least seven; and, after nearly breaking our necks over stones, and riding over places almost impracticable, we arrived about midnight, extremely tired, having been about fifteen hours in our saddles.

August 19th.—Ain Berde stands on one of the ridges of the mountain at a distance of two hours and a half from Beirout. We have a beautiful view of the harbour, and descry the French squadron under Admiral La Susse, which arrived some days ago. Myrtles and grapes, figs and mulberries, are growing round us in every direction. The air is fine and the water sweet, but our eyes are fixed upon the sea, and our thoughts upon home.

August 20th.—As I rode down the hill to Beirout, gazing on the sea, two large ships appeared entering the roadstead; they had set every stitch of canvass, and a fresh breeze was sending them along like steamers. We made out English colours, and as the first ship rounded the French admiral, and came to anchor in magnificent style, the sails disappeared almost instantly, and she took up her position, and showed herself to be one of the finest ships we have in the service—the Vanguard; the other was the Cambridge. The Phoenix steamer had preceded them a day.

Sept. 3rd. — Her Majesty's steamer, Phoenix, at sea! Thanks to Providence, we are at last stretching far away from the Syrian shore. The chain of Lebanon is fading fast from our sight, and our eyes are resting for the last time upon Asiatic hills. I cannot say that I am happy, or joyful, my feelings are far more intense than these words would express, and my first impression is one of boundless gratitude to the great Being by whom we have been preserved through our wanderings, and watched over; for we have been free from sickness, and have escaped serious accident.

Here, we feel as if at home, for English faces are all round us; English habits and customs once more prevail, and are again familiar to the eye and ear—so long estranged from all. The Englishman who desires to be proud of his own country should leave it for a year; he will then learn to know its value.

We weighed anchor about twelve, and steamed all day through sunny skies and waveless waters; but the heat was terrific, whether below or on deck.

Sept. 5th.—Once more we are at Alexandria. The land about Aboukir was made very early, and we anchored, about mid-day, near our old berth. Here we found the Cyclops; and the Vernon had just sailed for Beirout. Said Pacha, the admiral of the fleet, is exercising two frigates and six line-of-battle ships outside the harbour. They say he made a very bad hand of getting to sea, half the ships being in bad condition, and one having lost her rudder from actual rottenness. However, the force, such as it is, makes an imposing show.

Sept. 6th.—Once more I dined at Mehemet Ali's table. The service was much the same as at Mehallet el Kebir, only more pomp was displayed, and a greater number of attendants collected in a large circular room, from whence there was a view of the harbour and shipping. Opposite to us, at dinner, was Achmet Pacha, who brought off the Sultan's fleet from Constantinople. Mehemet Ali addressed no one; the guests seemed ill at ease; scarcely any one opened his lips, nor was there anything like conversation; oppo-

site the Pacha, at the foot of the table, was the prime minister, Artin Bey.

After dinner, the Pacha descended the great stairs of the palace, Artin Bey holding up his sword as he walked, and carrying, also, his snuff-box and handkerchief. At the door was a small calèche with a leather covering and front windows, with four horses. A crowd of guards and Janizaries, with attendants of all sorts, were thronging round, and staring at the Frank who followed the Viceroy into his carriage.

Away we went; guard after guard turned out, the people were bowing to the ground before us, and every now and then petitions were thrown into the carriage, which Artin Bey gathered up and conveyed into his pockets.

We proceeded for about five miles to a part of the Mahmoudié Canal, near which were villas belonging to various merchants of the town. On a balcony overhanging the water, divans were prepared with carpets and some chairs. Before this house the Pacha left his carriage, and after he was seated, pipes and

coffee were brought. The balcony was close upon the road leading along the canal; there was neither gate nor fence, and the water was covered with barges and boats, and constant traffic prevailed on all sides of us. Mehemet Ali remained here for two hours, and we afterwards returned to the town as we came.

Sept. 7th. — The Vanguard and Cambridge were seen off the harbour to-day. They first saluted the palace, and afterwards the flag of Said Pacha, which compliment was returned by the forts and the ships. About twelve, we got under weigh, and soon cleared the harbour. As we turned our faces towards Malta, the Vanguard, spreading her broad sails to the breeze, soon bade us adieu. She stretched away, accompanied by the Cambridge, eastward, along the coast, bound for Corfu.

Sept. 13th. — This morning we reached Malta. As we passed the great harbour, we saw the Queen, Rodney, Indus, Impregnable, Howe, and Monarch, with the Medea and Devastation steamers. On taking up

our berth, passing close to the Geyser, we anchored nearly opposite the Parlatorio.

September 22nd.—The fleet got under weigh at daylight, this morning. The Queen went out first; the others were mostly towed by the steamers. The Impregnable, with every sail set, could not move. The Queen slipped out, with a light air, in the most beautiful style.

September 25th.—The Prometheus arrived to-day at three o'clock; at five, we were going ahead out of the great harbour. We are now just losing the light, and fairly off on the second stage of our homeward journey.

October 2nd.—We arrived to-day at Gibraltar, and were immediately put into quarantine, our time at Malta not being out. We have until the day after to-morrow to amuse ourselves on board, for they will not even allow us to take in coal, while under the ban of the Health Board.

October 11th.—Here we are anchored at Corunna in a comfortable berth, which is better than facing a north-easter in the bay.

We rowed ashore to a miserable *posada*, where, after some difficulty, the people were induced to send for horses, to take us to the field of battle.

The situation of Corunna is picturesque, independently of those associations, however melancholy, which must render it interesting to every Englishman.

We rode along a *chaussée*, into the country, and turning down a lane to the right of the road, after passing a few fields, soon found ourselves upon the far-famed scene of action. Having passed along the lines, we entered the church to which Sir John Moore was taken, after he was wounded, and also visited the spot where he is said to have fallen.

The country people are well dressed, and the costume extremely becoming. The land is excessively productive; cattle abound, and there are signs of moderate affluence among the peasantry. I believe, in the late revolutions that, like the whirlwind, have swept over Spain, Corunna has been undis-

turbed by commotions, and has preserved a comparative state of tranquillity.

We were agreeably surprised, on going to the theatre, to find a spacious house, a tolerable orchestra, and an efficient corps-dramatique. It seldom happens that, in a provincial exhibition, there is so much to praise and so little to criticise. The only remarkable point was, that there being no jealousy between the prima donnas, the contralto sang quietly, and Adalgisa was not determined that Norma should be eclipsed.

We visited the grave of Moore, situated on a bastion, which overlooks the town. It has been lately fenced in by a paling, enclosing also, a garden, supported by the voluntary subscriptions of those who visit the spot. The tomb is an oblong piece of granite, with a plain inscription and a brass cannon at each corner.

October 14th.—The gale continuing from the north-east, with heavy squalls, we entered the harbour of Ferrol. Nothing can be more striking than this—the Portsmouth

of Spain. A hundred sail of the line could anchor here in safety, completely land-locked. The entrance is extremely narrow, and when once inside, it is not easy to trace the channel by which admittance has been obtained. In the interior of the harbour there is a magnificent basin, the finest, perhaps, in the world.

The country is like Corunna—fertile and beautiful; but nothing can exceed the desolation of the town: deserted and dreary streets run at right angles to each other, apparently without any inhabitants, and devoid of life and sound. There is scarcely a cart to be seen, and there are neither horses nor cattle. At Corunna, the excitement of a trading town prevails, and every street is full of business and life. Ferrol is like a city of the dead; it seems either as if pestilence had been here, or that there was an absolute want of population; and yet the old consul declares, that on Sunday the streets are thronged with people, and pretty women sally forth from every quarter on this, their only holiday. The truth is, the

inhabitants are so poor, that few know where to-morrow's dinner will be found. Most of the residents are half-pay officers, or official people, to whom their salaries are seldom paid, and whose wives and daughters occupy themselves in embroidery or needle-work, to keep their family from starvation.

Oct. 15th.—This morning we examined the arsenal, and the vast basin, and were ushered into the armoury and model room. This great harbour contains only one half-finished frigate, two line-of-battle ships, and one old corvette. One of these is the *Heros*, which escaped being captured at Trafalgar. The armoury contains barely enough muskets for a regiment, and these are rusty and half spoiled. The government cannot afford to pay the expense of cleaning, and the Carlist arms, which were taken in the late war, are now eaten up with rust and filth. Everything is gone to decay. The finest naval works of Spain are useless and falling to ruin; grass is growing over the dockyard; and, where five thousand men were once employed, and ten thousand soldiers in

barracks, there are now barely fifty, and not five hundred troops.

Oct. 16th. — At sea again, and in the middle of the bay, wind still N. E.; but we are going along seven knots an hour, and every minute brings us nearer our native air. We passed C. Ortegual last night.

Oct. 18th.—Once more we are in merry England. The first light we made was St. Catherine's. A short time brought us round the Nab; and we took up our berth in the middle of the harbour.

I cannot close this record of an interesting year without a feeling of deep gratitude to that Providence which has watched over and protected us, in moments of danger and difficulty, among various changes of climate, and in unhealthy and comfortless regions.

THE END.

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